



State of the City 2020

Ammon friends, family and staff,

It is a new year, and a new decade. And what a year, and what a decade it has been. I think I speak on behalf of the entire council when I say what a privilege it has been to be a small part of the City of Ammon's progress. I see vision, desire, and purpose in every department. I see a City that is moving and improving. And as the dawn of the new decade rises on Ammon foothills, I am committed to seeing Ammon continue to be the place Where Tomorrow Begins for our residents, businesses, and visitors. Tomorrow, and every day thereafter, looks bright.

Water

I am pleased with what the City has accomplished in 2019. We know that our biggest change has been a conversion to a responsible metered water system. This has not come without some challenges. Adjusting to a new system is not easy. But what we have implemented will help preserve and protect our precious water resource far into the future. It was the right thing to do.

Now, I want to reiterate that, as of November of last year, residents can come into the City and request a level pay, or "Equal Pay" option for their water, similar to an arrangement they might be familiar with their electricity or gas bills. And, before the next watering season begins, Ammon will unveil a web link portal where residents can watch their water use from the day before, which will allow easier adjustments to water use. We also made a promise to look again at rates in the spring, before the new watering season. That will happen before April.

We are also on track with our water facilities master plan by purchasing the property for the Woodland Hills well, we have adopted direction for pressurized irrigation and completion of a plan to implement it in new developments and some existing locations, and we've vastly improved our billing with implementation of Xpress Bill Pay.

As we all know, we still have a small portion of the city that is not yet metered. For this reason, we also passed a meter installation plan in 2019, which would have finished metering throughout the city within six years. Reality, however, is that it has occurred at a much faster pace. Our goal for 2019 was 458 meters. Ultimately, we installed 805 meters. Thank you to our excellent meter install teams for such outstanding work. I am committed to working toward acceleration of our meter install plan so we can abbreviate the six years to two or three. We will work toward this over the coming weeks and months.

Fiber

In 2019 Ammon established its third local improvement district for fiber to the home. LID3 will ultimately connect over 277 new residential fiber users, passing 510 homes when completed. We also established LID4, which will be 2020's fiber project, and will pass some 650 homes in the Woodland Hills, Cortland Ridge, and Fox Hollow subdivisions. In total, approximately 1450 residential properties or approximately 35% of the city have fiber access today.

When I began as Mayor, due to ever-increasing demand, I challenged our Technology and Fiber Director Bruce Patterson to bring Ammon Fiber to all residential subdivisions within five years. In order to accomplish that goal, I would like to announce a new initiative called "Ammon Ignite 2021." Ammon Ignite 2021 will be a campaign to make our 2021 project, LID5, our final, city-wide project, including any homes in prior LIDs which have not been connected. Within the next few weeks, a new link will exist on ammonfiber.com for residents to fill out paperwork for this LID5 plan.

As has always been the case, this is an opt-in program, so nobody will be forced to get fiber. But, as with prior LIDs, this will require that we receive a sufficient amount of signups through the remaining properties. We will watch signups for LID5 over the next several months, and will determine by the end of September of this year whether we have a sufficient amount to initiate Ammon Ignite 2021.



Now, you may have heard a rumor that Ammon Fiber is not affordable. I am here to tell you that it is! This is important--fiber customers can request that the construction fee and the operation and maintenance fee are both paid monthly. The result is that a resident would pay \$38.50 to the City for their fiber connection, and as little as \$9.99 to the service provider, or less than \$50 for a 1 gig connection, and there are other plans that are even cheaper. With no other fees to pay. A household can run their internet, television and home phone on fiber. Again, the cost of this service is directly comparable or even cheaper than what many are paying right now for internet, television and home phone. If residents have any questions about how to set this up, please let the City know.

Streets

In last year's state of the city address, I said that I wanted 2019 to be a year gave some significant time resolving some of our street issues. Thanks to our Tracy Bono, Jason Clapp and the rest of our street department, we have accomplished a lot in streets during 2019. As you know, we were awarded the grant for the Sunnyside/Ammon traffic signal and we also completed that construction. We made turn lane and drainage improvements on 1st Street. We added a turn lane to Ammon Road, and also at major points on 17th Street, and finally, we constructed a roundabout at the corner of 17th and Crowley Road in 14 days. These changes have made a big difference in traffic flow.

As you know, this is not enough. We still have major road issues throughout the city that we need to address, and not enough consistent street funding. The changes that were made this past year were done either with grant money or within budget, because they were efficient, inexpensive changes. We will continue to make those types of improvements in the coming year, but we also need to have some significant discussions regarding city street funding.

Parks

I want to thank Ken Knoch and his team, Jed Solomon and our new Recreation Director, Randal Miller for a great year. The McCowin parking lot changes have been very beneficial, and the Quail Ridge walking path is a very nice addition to that park. I am looking forward to doing making similar, and long-overdue changes to Woodland Hills Park this year, which will help with parking, amenities and traffic flow. I also want to see us complete what would be the longest stretch of walk/bike path in the city, from the Woodland Hills neighborhood north along the canal and railroad right-of-way to 17th Street. This would provide a nice backbone for the city as we move forward with additional walk/bike paths in the future.

After we address some needs at Woodland Hills, I would like to see our Parks Department shift its focus to another park that is long-overdue for improvements, and even a name—the park that we refer to as Cabela's Park.

And, I am very pleased and grateful that the City received a \$50,000 grant from Idaho Central Credit Union, which will allow us to build in 2020 the best tennis/pickleball courts in the area at McCowin Park. We will also see sail shades and other improvements to the area around the Ammon Pool. And I'm looking for great things from our Rec Director as we develop Ammon's recreation programs.

Sanitation/Sewer

Now, our sanitation crew is second to none. I want to give a hearty thank you Dan Winterholler and George Rheinhart. If you haven't seen it yet, Dan Winterholler has received some gratitude from Ammon residents for going the extra mile in his job. On more than one occasion recently, Dan got out of his truck and walked up to a home to bring a trash bin out to the street when the resident had forgotten to do so. On more than one occasion, in more than one neighborhood. This is the kind of service that I know we all strive for at the City, and Dan getting caught on camera gives me an opportunity to give him some well-deserved kudos. Thank you, Dan, for going the extra mile.

Now, another thing that I am proud of from this last year is that when we saw that a company could provide commercial sanitation more efficiently than we could, we made the decision to let that company take over the



service. I believe that we should be that open minded with everything that we do. I want to congratulate the city and the council for thinking outside the box.

This year, I think you will see that we have significant decisions to make with regard to sewer. The sewer plant has some major upgrades that will need to be made. In addition, this is the year when we will need to make major adjustments regarding the future of the structure of EIRWWA. This is the year when we move EIRWWA into the more efficient operation it needs to be.

Fire

I am so proud of our amazing fire department. We have the most efficient and effective operation of any city similar in size. They go out of their way to serve. They are a huge asset to the city, and I am grateful. You may have noticed that the fire department has acquired an ARF truck and another tender truck – both at no cost to the city. This year, we need to discuss future growth needs for the fire department, especially on the east side of the city. What does our fire department look like at the start of the next decade? That is a conversation I look forward to having in 2020.

Development

2019 has been busy for our building department. A total of 1,024 permits were issued, with 165 single family dwelling permits. I want to say thank you to our building department for their excellent work.

There are some development challenges I would like to see us tackle in 2020. First, several years ago we had engineers look at and develop a master plan for improvements to the original town site and Hillview and Hillsdale areas of town. It is time to review and move that plan forward. Secondly, we have an opportunity in 2020 to further improve traffic flow by buildout of John Adams to Hitt Road, including the John Adams Bridge, buildout of Curlew to 1st Street, full improvement of 1st Street and the 1st Street Bridge. This is a big project, but I firmly believe that it can be accomplished if we continue with our plan for urban renewal in that area. The district is ready to initiate.

In the future, it is critically important that we annex land responsibly. 17 acres were annexed into the city in 2019. I am proud that we are leading now in how, when and if we annex, with a new Annexation Procedures Ordinance and an Annexation Analysis tool. It is imperative that we do this not reactively, but proactively.

Internal Improvements

I would be remiss if I didn't mention some significant improvements in how the city is operating internally, due in large part to the great work of Micah Austin, Jennifer Belfield, April Forrest, Cindy Donovan, Charlie Allen and more. We had a record year for interest earnings on our investments. We reorganized the administrative offices, resulting in the creation of a Finance Department and the hiring of an HR Director. We established a PTO and longevity bonus system, and implemented our first wage study in eight years. Our building department has had another great year. The newly-created Traffic Commission has efficiently handled all traffic-related issues. We got a new and improved website, new videos and even free videos promoting Ammon which are on their way. We have concluded FY 2019 within budget and with a clean audit, and adopted a balanced FY 2020 budget. Our Employee Recognition Committee has been a great internal improvement. We have had some turnover, but our new hires Tim Hinze as enforcement officer, Tracy Bono as engineer, and Kristina Buchan as city clerk will make us better and stronger. I also want to welcome wholeheartedly Josh Wheeler to the Council. We will really miss Brian Powell, who provided such direction and leadership. But new ideas and a fire to improve things are good for cities, and I look forward to working with you, Josh. Legislatively, we are looking for our state leaders to pass sales tax revenue sharing reform this year which more directly connects sales taxes back to cities and counties to growth. And I'm sure I am missing something important, but I feel like we're on a fast train and I'm excited for where we are heading.

In closing, Ammon will continue to lead on important issues like water conservation, fiber optics and other 21st century changes. Our voices matter. What we do matters. We serve our residents. We must serve them well. We have challenges ahead, may we face them with optimism and vision. We have jobs to do, may we do them with a



resolve to live up to the trust of the public for whom we serve. This is not an easy job, but I am grateful to be doing it alongside people who I know give their heart and soul because they believe in what we are doing.

Thank you to each and every one of you. Now, let's get to work.

Mayor Sean J. Coletti