

Novato United

2018: <title slide>

Good morning my fellow Novatans. Today, I continue to address you with humility. BUT now with 1.5 years on the job as your City Manager, quite a bit more confidence due to time developing relationships with our city staff, our community leaders, and our future. I still don't have all the answers, but I know where we are...sitting on pretty solid ground...and where are heading...UP. I continue to enjoy this great little city...One of the healthiest and most educated places in the Country. We are a fortunate people and we are also a compassionate people.

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Over the past year and a half I have become immersed in **Novato's incredible assets**—our open space, parks, wetlands, I often get in a jog at rush creek; the history and traditions we honor—like, the City's birthday. Paint the Town Red was an excellent 'posh' event up at the wonderful IM Pei designed Buck center...(my job was to distribute glasses of bubbly stuff so everyone I interacted with was smiling and happy) and further with the very fun inaugural family birthday affair at city hall and on our civic green. Special thanks to the committee who brought both of these events to our community earlier this year. Our strong and mighty non-profit community continues to thrive and grow...it was very uplifting to see the successes of the Youth Center and Human Needs Center coming together to create an even mightier service organization. Congratulations to Cheryl Paddock and Deanna Euritt and your boards. Our robust businesses—big & small--and our entrepreneurial spirit; our active and engaged community, and our dedicated City Council and top-notch professional City staff. **Novato is headed up Upon a solid foundation.**

Novato continues to show its' resilience. The horrible fire storms that ravaged our neighbor to the north was a difficult time in our history. But Novato turned its compassion into action--our churches and service clubs made us all proud providing service and support for those impacted by the fires...while the staff and public safety personnel completed their duties.

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SO HOW ARE WE DOING....WHAT IS THE STATE OF THE CITY?

THE CITY is HUMMING. WE ARE LIKE A FINE-TUNED ENGINE (POWERFUL WHEN NEEDED, BUT PURRING THE REST OF THE TIME)

Why? Right....how do I make that determination? From the facts...what have I seen over the past year/18 months? What do I see as on the horizon?

Let's start with finances. That is generally an area where people give some consideration for how you are doing. Our Finance department has reported that our general fund reserves are at 16% which is above our adopted city policy. <SLIDE> That makes me feel good, I hope that it makes you feel good too. This fact is very important because local government is hard...there is a lot to do and many things to maintain...and lots of outside influences that are not often favorable.

Maintenance of our city facilities...we can go there for a moment. The city has a very aggressive maintenance program. We put away money every year for our fleet, prefund our insurance liability reserves, and salt away funds to repair and replace city facilities. We are not a very old city comparatively in California...but through Hamilton we have some aging facilities. <SLIDE>

Staff is just now presenting a plan for new roofing, windows, flooring, etc. for the MOCA building in Hamilton. The pool, which is not old, is also getting some work this year. These are not inexpensive fixes.

The city also keeps up on our ADA transitions plan to ensure access and services are appropriate for all. And, our staff are working towards a better and more serviceable CIP (Capital Improvement Program) Program for FY 18/19. We have a big project on tap this year for the PD building on Machin.

Staying on money/finances...we have an excellent group sitting with us on our Novato finance oversight committee. Their support and additional sets of eyes have been a great asset to the Finance department. Thank you all for your service to Novato. And thanks to all of our commissioners!

Keep your eyes out for our budget process and the updated forecast for the next five years that will be presented to the council on Tuesday.

A bit more on finance...unfunded pension liabilities. Again, Novato is doing BETTER THAN MOST. We are able to fund our obligation for the coming fiscal year...and likely those that follow. AND this prudent City was given authorization by our City Council to pursue the creation of a new trust to help ensure we are able to address the long term unfunded pension liability for the city. This will not solve the issue that faces most all cities in the state...but it sure helps Novato breathe a bit easier. <SLIDE>

Why else are we doing pretty well? ...I like to point to partnerships and collaborative efforts. If an organization has good partners, that is a sign that you are doing pretty well. Over the past year, we have examples of good partnerships in Novato. <SLIDE>

- Reimagine citizenship program with Dominican University Workforce housing opportunity under pursuit with NUSD

- Flood reduction work in advance of this year's rainy season with County, Flood Control, environmental agencies and Caltrans
- Initiation of efforts for aesthetic improvements along Highway 101 with CalTrans....I'm really looking forward to that one which should include one for our local nonprofits
- Speaking of which....the Marin Mobile Care, and mobile showers program – partnership with the other Cities/County and local nonprofits working together to tackle a major human services issue

There are more, but this is a good showing of the fact that Novato has partners, and is willing to work collaboratively....which will translate to support if and when we may need it most in Novato.

BREAK FOR Q&A

We CONTINUE TO IMPROVE AND REFINE...TO DO BETTER FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

Our Econ Dev staff, which is all new, have implemented a business retention program and have already met with 125 Novato businesses. I think adding direct customer service is always a positive process improvement. Great job people! <SLIDE>

I mentioned already the process improvement efforts on our CIP Program. The collaboration between finance and public works and admin should greatly improve the existing program and help focus dollars where they can be more effective. I've already seen this in play for the 18/19 FY.

Let's talk about Interest and investment in Novato. An area where the "how we are doing" question also leads me to "Novato is doing pretty well."

Where shall I start....my calendar, One - lots of activity there over the past 6-10 months. When I first arrived, I heard how hard it was to do business in Novato. Over the past year and a half, with a great team of staff (Planning, Building, ED, PW), we are developing a new reputation—as the friendly, hip place to be. The interest from developers, potential and existing business has been staggering. And we are committed to providing our community with the best jobs, housing types, places to shop & play—so we continue to strive to make Novato the place you are proud to call home.

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Two – First and Grant; I likely sound like a broken record to many of you who have been at meetings with me...but the top interest from groups over the past 18 months is..."what is going to happen at the old Pini hardware site?" and now we have a response. The private sector is currently moving an exciting mixed use project through our development review process. 32 units of residential and 13,000 sf of retail on grant.

Novato has retailers looking at spaces on Grant. We have existing business owners putting down serious dollars toward improvements. Three is serious momentum with the urban winery efforts downtown. We also have Michelin rated chefs putting down private sector dollars and making a very positive mark on our downtown Grant avenue. There are international firms- both of which are home grown Novato businesses - putting down major dollars in our business parks...and winning international awards for their facilities ...and others making major campus type planning efforts. As an economic development professional...having this kind of interest is awesome.

Our General Plan update, is still in process. The City was hoping to wrap that up this past year....but I believe prudently has been striving to ensure that the plan not only looks to our future, but is open to the reality of the day and current market reality and trends. If the City is not prepared to accommodate the reality of today...a major effort might be a bit diminished. Examples include our slow office market, major changes in retail regionally as well as nationally, and key industries that are now thriving much more so than when our general plan update was initiated.

The opening of the **SMART regular service has exceeded expectations....and** Novato is a big part of that success. I understand that demand has been high enough that more train cars have been ordered.

We will continue our **partnership with the Downtown Streets Team**. Their model of providing hope and a dignified path out of homelessness through meaningful work has brought a shine and a pride to our streets in our neighborhoods and Downtown—while addressing a growing issue that is facing all communities. And over the past year the DST has taken on the mobile care program mobile showers effort. That new service just launched a month ago.

In the not-to-distant future, we will be **embarking on some long-anticipated Capital Improvement Projects**, many of which are currently out to bid or in design, including:

- Major improvements to the Dogbone Meadow dog park
- The multi-year effort of widening of Novato Boulevard
- Our annual resurfacing of 5 miles of our local roads
- Improvements to Vineyard Road, including resurfacing and new bike lanes and now closing sidewalk gaps in the area

Over the next fiscal year, **we expect to have a new General Plan adopted and a completed Downtown Parking Study**

We will continue to work on **business expansion and retention efforts**. Our **ShopLocal program** will emphasize local business-to-business transactions and launch a campaign that will **connect prosperity with sustainability**.

As part of our ongoing commitment to public engagement and transparency, **we will be updating our public engagement plan**--with input from the community--to bring it to Council for adoption later this year. And as part of our installation of our new finance software, we will be looking to add an **Open Data portal** to provide our residents the ability to easily access and locate City data and freely share and use that data.

We will continue to **bring City Hall to the neighborhoods**, by holding open houses throughout the City on various city topics—including the City's budget.

In Novato, we are fortunate to have an engaged community. Whether it is serving on a City commission, committee, or board, volunteering for one of our non-profits, joining a service club—one of three Rotaries in Novato, or just coming to a City Council meeting or City-sponsored event. Do and Get involved. This is your Novato!

So, I leave you with this thought as I close:

We are united. What divides us is fear, what unites us makes us stronger, resilient, and prepared for whatever the future brings our way!

Q and A

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