



# City of Seattle

Mayor Jenny A. Durkan

## **2021 State of the City Address, as delivered by Mayor Jenny A. Durkan February 15, 2021**

Good evening, Seattle.

I'm joining you from the Filipino Community of Seattle.

This community center and the families it serves were hit hard by COVID-19.

But like so many in Seattle, they stepped up and tripled the meals they served.

Now, they're joining the City's efforts to vaccinate Seattle equitably.

Soon, we'll transform this very room into a one-day pop-up vaccination clinic for Filipino elders.

This past year changed everything for all of us:

Masks, testing, isolation.

Losing loved ones.

Small business owners struggling every day to survive.

Workers facing lost wages and jobs, and unable to pay their rent.

Parents grappling with childcare, kids at home, and online learning.

And the pandemic disproportionately hit our Black, Indigenous, and Latinx communities.

The pandemic is our lifetime's challenge.

And it has amplified challenges we already had:

Homelessness.

Public safety.

The climate crisis.

And racial inequities in every system: health care, employment, education, and policing.

In the coming weeks, we'll discuss and implement plans to continue progress on each of these issues.

Including the concrete steps we'll take together to recover and reopen downtown.

Including steps we will take to improve the livability and safety of downtown.

We'll open hundreds of shelter spaces and affordable homes to bring more neighbors inside from our streets and parks so they can get stability and services.

We'll address public safety, expand alternatives to policing, and have other responses.

We'll invest nearly \$100 million in the health and resiliency of Black and other communities of color to address generational disparities.

This work will be hard.

We will need all of us.

We will have to focus on our shared goals.

Right now, our most important shared goal is getting through this pandemic and beating this virus.

And vaccinations are the path to healing, recovery, and reopening.

That's how we beat this virus.

And how we can fully reopen our businesses and schools and bring workers back downtown.

The health of downtown is so critical to the entire city and region.

To begin our vaccination process, our Seattle Fire mobile teams started working around the clock to vaccinate vulnerable and impacted neighbors, even when we got a foot of snow.

They have provided more than 4,400 vaccinations to workers at adult family homes, health care workers and grocery store workers, and elders in our hardest hit communities.

They are doing heroic work and are on track to vaccinate thousands of Seattleites.

But we need to do so much more at a time when the current supply and getting an appointment is beyond frustrating.

Hopefully by spring, the federal government will increase supplies, and the City will be able to launch mass vaccination sites that are easily accessible in all parts of our city:

Rainier Beach.

West Seattle.

Downtown.

And multiple sites in North Seattle.

We're ready.

I want us to be the first city in the country to vaccinate 70 percent of our adults.

It is the most daunting and most important operation our city government has ever taken.

It will take all of us, working together.

Government, health care, philanthropy, business, and you.

I know you have been through a lot and you have done all that you can.

Each of us has a role to play.

When you're eligible, get your appointment and get vaccinated.

Help family, friends or neighbors make or get to appointments.

And if you can, contribute to the new All in Washington Vaccine Equity Fund that we've established today.

It's a fantastic public-private partnership and we want to support vaccine efforts in our hardest hit communities.

We pulled together at the beginning of the pandemic to support our neighbors in need.

And we can do it still.

I know everyone is just so tired.

But we are so close.

We have sacrificed and been through so much.

We can't let our guard down now.

Not until we get enough people vaccinated

We must still:

Wear masks.

Physical distance.

And not gather.

We just can't let up.

In closing, I won't sugar coat it:

We have a tough road ahead.

But there is hope on the horizon.

We will equitably vaccinate our community.

We will continue to support our neighbors with assistance for rent, meals, childcare and small businesses.

We will bring workers back downtown.

We will open many new affordable homes, many that I just announced these last three years.

We will bring more people from our parks and streets into permanent supportive housing and new 24/7 spaces and tiny homes.

We will forge a more equitable economy with programs like the Seattle Promise, which gives our public school graduates free college and a pathway to opportunity.

We will be able to gather again and we will open our new, world-class Climate Pledge Arena to watch our championship Storm and release the Kraken.

Seattle, we are writing the final chapters of this generational challenge.

The state of our city is resilient.

We are fatigued but determined.

We are challenged yet compassionate.

Never bet against Seattle.

This year, we will continue to be tested, but we will begin to recover and rebuild – more equitably.

Thank you and please remember, mask up and stay safe.