



**2019 Anaheim State of the City  
Mayor Harry Sidhu**

March 5, 2019, City National Grove of Anaheim

This is a great day in Anaheim.

For all of us. Our residents. Our neighborhoods. And our businesses.

On this day, when an immigrant gives a State of the City speech, I hope you will permit me a moment to reflect on what a momentous day this is for me personally and for our city.

Let me also take this moment to recognize and thank my wife for her support and for being with me here today. Thank you, Gin.

I am excited to be partnering with the Anaheim Chamber of Commerce on this special day for our community.

When I served on the City Council previously, the chamber was always a great partner for me. We sponsored a job fair and a health fair. They are always looking out for what is best for Anaheim.

Chamber Chairman Ross McCune. Chamber Chief Executive Todd Ament. Thank you for always looking to bring jobs and investment to this city and being a great advocate for our businesses and our residents. I look forward to continuing our partnership.

**2018**

2018 was a strong year for Anaheim.

I want to extend my appreciation to our former mayors and council members and our city staff, because it is due to their hard work that we have achieved so much.

In 2018, the economic impact from our conventions was more than \$1.5 billion.

We had 24.4 million visitors to our city — a record-setting number.

Visitors to Anaheim in Orange County spent \$9 billion.

We had 168,700 jobs in the city in 2018, up by almost 3,000 jobs from 2017.

More than 1 million square feet of office investment occurred last year, marking an increase of 27 percent from the prior year.

People want to be here and be part of our success.

### **Addressing Homelessness**

However, I am especially proud of this number: 325.

Here's why.

People who know me best, know that I'm a man of action.

When our City Council took office, the most pressing crisis facing us was the large number of those living in homelessness on our streets. This was a neighborhood and a humanitarian crisis.

We took immediate action.

On Dec. 20, the city of Anaheim and a number of business partners opened an emergency shelter near Angel Stadium of Anaheim as our first step on the road to providing 325 beds to those who needed them most.

And we did that first shelter in an astonishing 14 days.

*We are saving lives.*

I want our city to be a model for working with homeless individuals.

We are well on our way. And because of this work, we are giving back our parks and libraries to our residents.

Thank you to partners such as The Salvation Army, Illumination Foundation and Chrysalis, along with the generous donations of Bill Taormina, Visit Anaheim Cares, Disney, the Anaheim Ducks and Angels Baseball and many others.

This is only one part of the solution.

Anaheim was recently highlighted by Gov. Gavin Newsom in his State of the State speech.

He recognized our city for its affordable housing efforts, saying that he wants “to support cities that do what’s right, like Anaheim.”

I commend our city staff and my council colleagues on this recognition.

## **Empowering the American Dream**

We are just getting started.

I believe our best days are in front of us. That is the promise of the American Dream.

I spoke about this in my inaugural Council address, and it is what motivates me every day.

It is what drew me to the United States more than 40 years ago. It is what draws people here today. I spoke then about my desire to make Anaheim the city of the American Dream.

Today, I see that opportunity reflected around me, in the spirit of the industries and entrepreneurs that choose to invest in Anaheim.

In 2018, we increased the number of jobs in our city and provided businesses with \$1.5 million in commercial utility rebates and incentives.

I want Anaheim to be known as a welcoming place for business and a city that empowers the American Dream.

There are many Anaheim stories that inspire me: Fadi Awwad of Hummos & Pita, Sandra Day of Expert coatings & Graphics and Keith Simon of Polaris.

I want Fadi to be our city's next Carl Karcher — a man who also saw opportunity here when he opened his first restaurant in Anaheim. But making Anaheim the city of the American Dream means we can never rest.

## **Angels**

One challenge facing us was the situation with our beloved baseball team, the Angels.

As I took office, this upcoming season was likely to be the Angels' last in Anaheim.

I reached out to the team's owner, Arte Moreno, to see what we could do to keep the team here, unlock the potential of the land around the stadium and craft a plan that benefits our city and our residents.

Arte and I sat down and discussed the need to extend the team's option for one year in order to work out a long-term deal.

I am pleased that the City Council backed our proposal to make this happen. Now, we will start to map out the future of baseball in Anaheim.

That's exciting.

## **Anaheim Ducks**

And right next door is our city's other professional sports franchise, and our regional transportation hub.

The previous City Council moved quickly to strike a deal with Anaheim Arena Management, owner of the Anaheim Ducks and operator of Honda Center, so that we will continue to have Ducks hockey here in Anaheim for many, many years to come.

And this work sets the stage for even more entertainment, housing, hotel and office development, bringing new businesses and quality jobs to our city in the area around the arena.

I'm looking forward to the next 30 years. I hope you are, too.

## **Platinum Triangle**

As plans around Honda Center and Angel Stadium unfold, along with development of the multimillion-dollar LT Platinum Center, we will be connecting all of these opportunities in the Platinum Triangle.

Then we will have a mix of housing, neighborhood parks, offices, hotels, sports and arts and entertainment options that truly make this Orange County's downtown.

## **The Anaheim Resort**

We have so many strong industries in the city — especially our tourism industry.

This industry brought to so much to Anaheim in 2018. It's no wonder we are one of the top 20 places to visit in the world.

Now, thanks to investment by Wincome Group and the partnership of Prospera and O'Connell Hotels, Anaheim will soon have two brand new four-diamond hotels — the first ones built since Disney's Grand Californian Hotel & Spa opened more than 20 years ago.

Together with the recent expansion of the Anaheim Convention Center, these hotels will bring more high-end conventions to Anaheim — generating more dollars for local businesses and more tax revenue to invest in our neighborhoods.

Paul Sanford. Bill O'Connell. Ajesh Patel. Thank you for investing hundreds of millions of dollars in Anaheim and creating almost 1,000 permanent jobs.

I look forward next year to the grand openings at The Westin Anaheim Resort and the JW Marriott Anaheim Resort District.

## **Disney**

Of course, the most exciting investment happening in the resort comes from a galaxy far, far away.

With their newly announced contribution to the Orange County Housing Trust, the Disneyland Resort has set the example for how public-private partnerships can help to address the most pressing issues our community faces.

I am grateful for their leadership as well as the Orange County Business Council for stepping up to the plate.

Thank you, president of Disneyland Resort, Josh D'Amaro.

As you can see, there is a lot happening in Anaheim. Billions of dollars in investment.

## **Transit**

As we continue to see new investment and new development in both The Anaheim Resort and the Platinum Triangle, it is time to take a fresh look at all options to foster connectivity and mobility between these two economic powerhouses.

Transportation and mobility connections continue to evolve. It is time we update our thinking and our knowledge on *all the options*.

Los Angeles is exploring a monorail to connect the San Fernando Valley, West Los Angeles and Los Angeles International Airport.

Anaheim knows something about monorails.

Dallas and Dubai are making sure every rooftop is Uber Air ready for autonomous drone pods.

Up the freeway, Elon Musk's Boring Co. is drilling a rapid-transit test tunnel for fast-moving pods.

And in Orlando, Fla., Disney is testing gondola systems to connect hotels to theme parks. They can carry enough passengers to replace a six-lane roadway.

There are so many options.

We don't need to stick to any one system.

We just know that between our thriving resort and the incredible sports and entertainment district that will come from the investment we expect soon in the Platinum Triangle, we need a connection.

### **Task Force**

I will form a Transit Options Task Force to study how to move thousands of people between these two exciting areas of our city.

So employees, residents and guests can move quickly between these destinations without being bogged down in traffic.

### **Economic Development for Neighborhoods**

When Anaheim encourages investment and economic development, it lifts us all up.

It creates tens of thousands of jobs. It helps to solve our statewide and regional housing shortages. It brings hundreds of millions of dollars to our city.

But we know that there are some in our city who do not share this belief.

As I went door to door, and neighborhood to neighborhood, while I was campaigning for mayor, I heard from many of our residents that they supported economic growth in Anaheim.

They know it brings jobs that give people an opportunity to move ahead. They know it brings tax revenue to our city.

But still, they asked, when will I see the benefit of that development in *my neighborhood*?

Things are *good* in Anaheim. But with all the investment in this city, shouldn't they be *great*?

That is a fair question. As mayor of Anaheim, I share that sentiment.

For all of our districts, all of our neighborhoods and all of our residents, I want them to know that in Anaheim, they are *first*.

In Anaheim, "I'm first" should be something that every resident in our city can say, and *believe*.

### **Anaheim First**

Last year, Visit Anaheim, in partnership with the Anaheim Chamber of Commerce, launched a program called Anaheim First.

Because they want every resident of Anaheim to know that our efforts to bring more tourists here are not for the visitors, but for the residents.

I share that commitment.

And it is not enough to say that we are going to invest in Anaheim neighborhoods. We need to partner with Anaheim residents so that *they* drive that investment.

That starts with listening.

### **Resident Advisory Committee**

At the heart of this program is the Anaheim First Advisory Committee. Many of our committee members are here with us today.

These are residents from across the city who represent the diversity of Anaheim and who have already been working to make a difference.



These community leaders and stakeholders in every district and in every neighborhood will help us better understand the needs and desires of our residents.

I want you, as well as all of our residents, businesses and visitors to know that when we engage in economic development it is for a purpose. And that purpose is clear.

We engage in bringing jobs and investment to this city so that we can *invest* the proceeds in our neighborhoods.

We engage in economic development so we can *invest* in our residents. That is the reason.

But we need to make that real for our residents. Investing in our neighborhoods cannot be a vague promise.

It cannot be a hope.

It must be a real commitment. And from today forward, it will be.

## **Neighborhood Investment**

I want the city to make sure that Anaheim First is our vehicle for understanding neighborhood priorities.

That is why I am pledging today to make our city full partners with Anaheim First to drive meaningful neighborhood investment.

Our residents are the reason why investors — whether it is Henry and Susan Samuelli, Arte Moreno, Walt Disney Co., Fadi Awwad, Keith Simon or Sandra Day — are welcomed and encouraged to invest here.

In the next 10 years, I pledge this:

I want us to invest at least \$250 million of new city revenue — revenue that can be generated from all the investment we have talked about today — directly into our neighborhoods.

And I ask my council colleagues to join me in this ambitious commitment to make it happen.

As we head into our planning for next year's budget, working with staff, we can prioritize an immediate investment of \$20 million that we can put directly into neighborhoods, now.

Our council members are elected by districts. They come to City Hall with an eye toward what is good for the whole city but also to make sure that their constituent's needs are heard.

### **District 1**

In District 1, the time for action to improve parks and make the Beach Boulevard Specific Plan a reality is now.

We have talked about this for too long, and it is time to invest in District 1.

Council Member Denise Barnes, please join me in making that a reality?

### **District 2**

Council Member Jordan Brandman, you speak passionately every day about the needs of District 2, and I heard the same concerns when I went door to door.

For many years, you were our city's most powerful voice for the need to invest in our neighborhoods.

Whether it is parks, landscaping or bringing — say it with me Jordan — a Trader Joe's to west Anaheim, the time to invest in District 2 is now, wouldn't you agree?

### **District 3**

Council Member Jose Moreno, you and I share the immigrant's love for the promise of America. You are a strong advocate for your district.

Many of our most needy neighborhoods, and some of our greatest successes, are in your district. Work with me, Jose, to provide a pathway to the American Dream for every resident of District 3.

#### **District 4**

Mayor Pro Tem Lucille Kring, you have served this city well for many years. Much of the economic investment we speak of is in District 4, and you have been its No. 1 champion. I know you support this vision of investing in Anaheim.

You led the charge for investment and improvements in the Jeffrey-Lynn neighborhood many years ago and Ponderosa Park more recently. I know you'll help me make sure the neighborhoods around the resort are as beautiful as the resort itself.

#### **District 5**

Council Member Stephen Faessel, the Anaheim kid. Mr. Anaheim. Thank you for hosting us in your district today. You are the representative of District 5, which ranges from the Platinum Triangle to quiet, middle class streets near where you live, to some of our most challenged communities such as Anna Drive.

They all deserve our best, and working with you, we will make District 5 residents know we are doing this all for them.

#### **District 6**

And Council Member Trevor O'Neil, we are counting on you to make Anaheim Hills and east Anaheim feel more connected to the city while maintaining its unique charm.

I know that emergency preparedness and fire safety are important to your residents and neighborhoods. These initiatives can be, and should be, all of our priorities.

For all of our districts, all of our neighborhoods and all of our residents, I want them to know that in Anaheim, they are first.

Looking ahead, our city does face challenges. Neighborhood investment, paying down our pension obligations and more. We will rise to those challenges as we always have.

But we can do even more when partners such as the Disneyland Resort join with the Orange County Housing Trust to help us tackle tough issues.

We can do more when economic development has a purpose.

We can do more when the benefits of investment are felt here in Anaheim.

That means not only investing revenue back into our neighborhoods, but also that the jobs created lift up our people.

Our friends in the building trades have said that they want to see the official city bird of Anaheim be the crane. I love that.

As an engineer and builder by profession, I know that the men and women who work with their hands and tools to build these projects earn good wages and good benefits. We want as many of these jobs as possible to go to our local residents.

And to the workers in our hospitality industry, these are important jobs that help make Anaheim go. With the strength of investment in the resort, hotel workers are in high demand, and they are able to earn the highest wages they have ever received.

When coupled with education benefits and job training, they can launch incredible careers.

I truly appreciate new initiatives such as Disney's Aspire program in which Disney cast members can see a whole career ahead of them from their very first job in the resort. Until perhaps one day, they could have your job, Josh.

I want to see more of these education, training and local hiring programs in the resort, and with employers throughout the city.

Economic growth.

Job training.

Attainable housing.

Public safety.

New mobility options.

Investing in neighborhoods.

The key to Anaheim's future.

The key to making all our visions real is putting our residents first. For many years, the promise of Anaheim has been that as our economy thrives, our people will thrive with it. We have done a good job of meeting this promise, but we can do better.

We *will* do better.

We aim for nothing less than a new Golden Age for Anaheim.

We will work to help every Anaheim resident discover their own American Dream, so that Anaheim truly is the city that empowers the American Dream.

I ask you all to work with me to make this happen.

Thank you for joining me today. God bless you, and our great city.