

## ADAMS, from page 1

Portlanders of color continue to fare so poorly. There are both great moral and economic reasons for us to be an equitable city.

The creation of the Office of Equity and Human Relations is one example. Twenty years ago, we had some of the worst air quality in the nation. We didn't recycle, and we weren't a bicycle city. We had some of the most numerous air quality violations. We put a plan together and we got to the Office of Sustainable Development. Twenty years later, we are leaders in the nation. We reduced our greenhouse gas emissions by 26 percent in the last four years while we've become a hot place at creating jobs.

Budgeting and equity are one area that we are set up to do good things. For the first time, we've mapped geographically where the city's money goes. Where we need it the most is the continued push on the equity front. We need to see equity brought to fruition, especially around race. It's holding the city's potential back. We have the Office of Equity and an initial strategy, but we are nowhere near being the city of equality that we can be. There are so many symptoms of inequality — poverty is suffered too greatly on the shoulders of folks in East Portland and of Portlanders of color. The fact that no city across the nation, much less Portland, has figured out ways to improve neighborhoods without gentrifying them is a challenge. Portland has never focused on equity in any serious, methodical, planned, accountable way. I would say that whomever is elected mayor, needs to focus on and strengthen the equity agenda. It will take care of many of the things we're talking about here today.

So those are the four goals: prosperity, education, health and equity. They go together and they need to be worked together. The Portland Plan is how to get

**"I've worked in City Hall long enough to know that this is a bubble. What a great way to peak outside of the bubble and for others to connect with me as mayor by using social media. All of the social media I do, I do it in a two-way conversation."**

there. Build on it. There's plenty of work to do, and plenty of space for new ideas to problems we have not solved.

**I.B.:** What are the biggest challenges for the incoming mayor?

**S.A.:** The fundamental challenge is fewer resources than demand for programs and services. After that, it's the fact that the city remains to have too great of a degree of an inequity of opportunity. That is why I focused on education. We don't run the schools, but I made huge investments in education on behalf of the city. Even though we don't run it, education is one of the great equalizers in our society.

**I.B.:** Talk to us about how you think social media and technology can be used for the common good as a public servant.

**S.A.:** What's interesting right now, according to what I read, is the technology gap on text message availability. The economic gap, the race gap, around a piece of technology, which is text messaging and basic cell phones, has never been smaller. There is opportunity in that. It's still tough and a big challenge.

We are trying to take advantage of that. Everyone in Portland is so wired up and very active on social media. I love it. I've worked in City Hall long enough to know that this is a bubble. What a great way to peak outside of the bubble and for others to connect with me as mayor by using social media. All of the social media I do, I do it in



Mayor Sam Adams at the Clinton Global Initiative in August, 2012

PHOTO BY ADAM SCHULTZ

a two-way conversation.

"The Oregonian" likes to criticize me because they think that if I am active on social media I am too frenetic and I am not focused. That is the old-school media criticizing my direct relationship with my constituents. We are able to learn things real time about our city through social media.

I've been piloting using social media and before I leave, it will be the expectation of all the bureaus. For example, you will see us roll out much more robust Twitter

that took place during that time. (Laughing).

Bicycling is strategic. I back cycling because it makes sense for the individual Portlanders and for the city as a whole. Even if you never plan on getting on a bike, it makes sense for you as well. It's less congestion for folks that have to, or want to, use a car. It's less wear and tear on the road, which means that gas tax dollars go further because the roads will stay better, longer. It keeps people healthier, which has a positive impact on our health care premiums, if we are lucky enough to have health care.

On the an individual basis, it is oftentimes the fastest way to get from point A to point B.

That aside, I have made safety of all modes my top priority for the Department of Transportation. Despite all of the flash points and "Oregonian" critiques against bikes, by far most of our expenditures are going to the automobile-related aspects of our transportation system. My goal is to take a common sense approach with safety in mind.

That all being said, there is also the fact that, according to CEOs for Cities, which did an analysis of transportation costs for families in about a dozen cities across the United States. Portland families spent 20 percent less on transportation costs than comparable cities. Now that's money that stays in individual families pockets. Not every trip is going to work for every person on pedestrian, bike or even transit. But the more people that it does work for, the less they have to pay on transportation for their individual households, which makes their household budgets, which are under stress now, more secure.

**I.B.:** Talk to Street Roots readers about police reform and the directions you see the bureau going in the next decade.

**S.A.:** Fully embracing the fact that whether we control it or not, whether folks on the bureau like it or not, the Portland Police Bureau needs to be viewed as part of the treatment system for folks that are suffering from mental illnesses or addictions.

We know that having so many people who are suffering on the streets is beyond the bureau's control. We have to step up, both the police commissioner and a bureau and be more effective. We have to continue to help lead the community discussion to do better with the inadequate resources that currently exist for addiction, mental health and homelessness. We have to do better in fighting for more resources.

I am very optimistic with health care reform coming to fruition in the Tri-County area and with the Combined Care Organization strategy being led by Governor Kitzhaber and President Obama. It's now called Health Share Oregon. These are the hospitals and health care providers; it is the county and now the city, with our fire and police, and first responders of AMR ambulances and others who are coming together under health care reform and creating a system, including the police bureau, that are considered a part of the treatment system. We have 28,000 mental health calls a year, thousands that are so serious that we have to take a person against their will to the hospital because they are a threat to themselves or to others. We need to do that in a way with less force.

**I.B.:** The city of Portland and Multnomah County offer more money than any other government body towards creating and maintaining affordable housing and offering services for people experiencing poverty in the region, or the state. What's it going to take for the region and the state of Oregon to change the way they do business on the poverty front?

**S.A.:** Having a regional and statewide approach to the issues of affordable housing, access to housing, mass transit, mixed income neighborhoods and homelessness is critical. It has to be on a regional basis.

The fact is 40 percent of the population in Multnomah County and the City of Portland are spending 80 percent (twice the number of local dollars than we should be based on population). I have to admit that its frustrating when well-intentioned advocates for affordable housing and the homeless population, which I am a big advocate, only beat up on the City of Portland. I don't mind them beating up on the City of Portland, that's advocacy. Saying that, when was the last time advocacy groups put together a successful campaign and advocated in Washington, Clackamas, Clark County Commissioners, or Oregon City, Wilsonville, Beaverton, Hillsboro, Vancouver, Washington? Those communities have chosen not to spend local money on housing and homelessness. The money is there, it is just being spent on other things.

I'm hopeful that Sam Chase is going to do a great job at Metro as helping to educate the region on these issue. The majority of folks who are suffering economically should have the services and options throughout our region and not just in Portland.

expectations for individual police officers and the police bureau.

Too many politicians use technology and social media as just another way to push information out. I love the conversation with Portlanders.

**I.B.:** The technology world appears to be taking off in Portland...

**S.A.:** Yes, Portland competes not only on innovation in technology today, but also on values. We've done surveys, and yes it's important for the tech companies and people to be successful and make money, but just as important is what they are developing for the common good. It's a win-win to have real innovation being conducted by value-laden groups. We are cheaper, faster and for such a relatively small industry here, we have it all. We have the complete eco-system, especially for software technology and app-technology. We've worked on it, and it has been a targeted industry of ours. We have a strategy around it, it is a public-private partnership, and we are doing great things. I couldn't be happier on this front.

**I.B.:** Watching the critics publicly denounce city government for strategically putting money into the cycling infrastructure, I think back to when the City of Portland decided to maintain Forrest Park instead of developing it. Seems like an investment in the future generations that will last for years to come.

**S.A.:** Yes, I can only imagine the debates