

# INSIDE SCOOP

Councilmember Jan Drago

December 2007

## *Happy Holidays!*

Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, the Winter Solstice, the start of a New Year, my staff and I wish you a happy holiday season.

As we finish this year full of changes, I want to bring you up-to-date on what's been happening in my office and on the Council.

### Staff Changes

In February I hired a third Legislative Aide – Katherine Fountain – who has a bachelor's degree in Political Science and English Literature, and whose background includes an internship and temporary work with the City Council. Katherine handles constituent and neighborhood relations, some media relations, several non-transportation items, and oversees my schedule. I intend to expand her list of duties

even farther in the New Year.

Krista Bunch, who had been one of my two Legislative Aides for six years, left this summer for a wonderful opportunity at the Seattle Department of Transportation. She had done such a terrific job in staffing me as I chaired the Transportation Committee that SDOT hired her! I was sorry to lose her, but since she staffs the very department over which I have committee oversight we continue to work together quite often.

I hired another outstanding staffer, Jodie Vice, who has a background in transportation planning and is a certified planner. She had been working at the Downtown Urban Mobility Group, under a consortium of SDOT, King County Metro and

the Downtown Seattle Association. She had also been chairing the Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board so she brings a wealth of work on pedestrian safety issues with her as well.

Many of you know the third person in my office – Barbara Clemons, who has been with me since I was sworn in on January 3, 1994. She knows the Drago office history, the people, and the issues of my 3 ½ terms on the City Council.



Jan Drago and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi



Councilmember Drago and Kobe, Japan Mayor Yada



Team Drago: Katherine, Jodie, Jan and Barbara at the opening of the streetcar in December



## Council Changes

Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck, elected to the Council in 1999, decided in mid-2007 not to run for re-election in order to put his full focus on defeating a rebuild of the viaduct and working toward an environmentally responsible, sustainable solution for the waterfront that is not auto-dependent. I applaud Peter's determination and wish him well!

Councilmember David Della, a first-term councilmember who chaired the Parks, Education, Libraries and Labor Committee which I co-chair, lost his re-election bid. I enjoyed working with David and will miss him. I wish him well as he also moves to new phase in his life.

Peter's seat was won by Bruce Harrell, whose parents were both longtime City employees and who himself worked on the City Council as an aide to former Councilmember Paul Kraabel. David's seat was won by Tim Burgess, who served as a member of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Committee for 12 years.

2008 will also be a reorganization year for the Council, with the election of a new Council President, several new committee chairs and restructured committees. I will continue chairing the Transportation Committee. This reorganization work will be done in January.

## Council Swearing-in Activities

On Monday, January 7<sup>th</sup> at the 2 pm Full Council meeting, the first (and primary) order of business will be the swearing in of the five reelected and new Councilmembers – Sally Clark, Jean Godden, Tom Rasmussen, Tim Burgess and Bruce Harrell. This always-popular event is usually standing-room only. A reception will follow at 3:00 PM in the Bertha Knight Landes Room on the first floor of City Hall. I invite you to attend.

## 2007 Accomplishments Transportation Committee

2007 has been a very busy and interesting year for the Transportation Committee! Here are some highlights!

### South Lake Union Streetcar

On December 12, 2007, Seattle went "back to the future" as a new streetcar began operation! Several years ago, I was in Portland to attend a Rail-volution Conference. While there, I took a tour of the Pearl District as the streetcar tracks were being laid. I was quite excited by the development in the Pearl District and the role that the streetcar line was playing in that economic development. When I returned home, I met and shared my



Jan speaks at the opening of the Streetcar December 12, 2007

photos of the Pearl District with several people because I felt that we could accomplish something similar in South Lake Union! And WE DID! We finally did it! The City, in partnership with property owners along this route, has built our very own South Lake Union Streetcar line.

As people ride the streetcar, we are taking a huge step forward for our neighborhoods. We are securing Seattle's transportation independence and controlling our transportation destiny. Now we can control that destiny by working with other agencies and the public to make smart investments in transportation.

In 2008, I will work to make certain that this SLU streetcar will be but a small part of a larger City-wide system. People will get out of their cars as they realize that streetcars are affordable,



neighborhood-friendly transit that will move them around quickly and efficiently.

### **Bridging the Gap**

In 2007, Seattle residents witnessed some great improvements, thanks to “Bridging the Gap,” the 9-year transportation levy. Improvements included: 27.4 miles of newly paved roads, \$6 million allocated to Neighborhood Street Fund projects, 16 miles of “sharrow” markings and bike lanes, 8 blocks of new sidewalks, 11.5 blocks of sidewalk repairs, and thousands of new street signs. I look forward to seeing more transportation and safety improvements benefiting all of our neighborhoods.

### **Alaskan Way Viaduct/Urban Mobility Plan**

In 2007, we made great strides forward in working on a solution for the Alaskan Way Viaduct. In March, voters had the option to choose between a tunnel and an elevated viaduct. The voters rejected both options and that outcome led to the Council’s adoption of a resolution to study a new approach, one that focuses on moving people and goods, improves to and through access in to Center City, and creates a pedestrian-friendly waterfront. This study, the Urban Mobility

Plan, is being conducted by the Seattle Department of Transportation. The City Council is working closely with SDOT as they develop alternatives. In 2008, I will continue to chair the Viaduct Committee-of-the-Whole meetings to discuss the Urban Mobility Plan.

### **2007 Accomplishments Special Committee on Pedestrian Safety**

In early 2007, council passed a Resolution to create a new Special Committee on Pedestrian Safety. I’ve been co-chairing this committee and it’s been a wonderful experience to continue my commitment to pedestrian

safety! Some accomplishments include:

- ★ Working to help develop a Pedestrian Master Plan
- ★ Appointing members to the Pedestrian Master Plan Advisory Board (PMPAG)
- ★ Creating a Request for Proposal to develop a framework for a Pedestrian Safety Campaign

In 2008 the Pedestrian Safety Committee will continue to work on developing new legislation and partnering with the PMPAG to guide the Pedestrian Master Plan to fruition.



Councilmember Drago and the entire council stand at Sanislo Elementary to present the 2008 budget, with a focus on pedestrian safety.



## Budget

October and November are always busy times at Council! Seattle's booming housing and job economy made 2008 the most generous budget I have worked with yet. This means that not only will many services that have fallen by the wayside out of necessity in recent years receive funding again in 2008, but the City Council was actually responsible for over \$19 million of adds to the budget! Some of the items most generously funded include the library book fund, \$5 million in human services, a new skatepark and p-patch, enhanced public safety measures, and a \$1.5 million addition to the City's 'rainy day' fund. But my office worked tirelessly to keep its word and make 2008 a focus on pedestrian safety: almost \$3.5 million was added to the budget for pedestrian safety projects. Some highlights include:

- ★ Traffic calming measures along busy 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue South in Mount Baker
- ★ 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Transit Corridor improvements such as canopies, planters, and trash bins
- ★ Pedestrian-scale lighting and stairway improvements
- ★ \$25,000 grant to the Mobility Education Foundation

The Special Committee on Pedestrian Safety also sponsored several pedestrian safety improvements. Funding for:



Jan in Africa in September 2007

Councilmembers celebrate the centennial of the Pike Place Market, August 2007



- ★ A Pedestrian Education Awareness and Enforcement Campaign
- ★ New sidewalks and sidewalk repairs
- ★ Innovative pedestrian technology
- ★ Speed vans for school zones

Thanks to additional 2007 Council consultant funds, Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck and I were able to contract with the Convention and Visitors Bureau to build a Downtown Visitors Center at Westlake Park in 2008. This centrally-located storefront will help provide information and directions for the millions of visitors who come to Seattle each year. Also, I was able to co-sponsor a feasibility study for a Disaster Preparedness Center with Councilmember Conlin as well as hire a consultant to conduct outreach and facilitation

for a suicide barrier on the Aurora Bridge. Both projects will help save lives!

## Sister City Relationship

2007 marked the 50th Anniversary of the Seattle-Kobe sister-city relationship! In May, I was among a 75-member Seattle delegation visiting Kobe, Japan. We celebrated our longstanding relationship with many of the local dignitaries. Our great friends from Kobe then visited Seattle twice, in July for Seafair and in October to open "Japan Envisions the West," an exhibit at the Seattle Art Museum. I also had the honor of joining Kobe Mayor Yada at a City Hall ceremony to accept their gift of the world's largest kimono. I know Seattle and Kobe will enjoy another 50-year relationship!

