

**Charlie Luke's Salt Lake City Council Induction Speech
January 4, 2016**

Four years ago I stood here, newly elected and excited to represent the residents of District 6 and Salt Lake City. With that excitement was a normal and healthy dose of anxiety and readiness to jump into a new role as a council member. Today, I am joined by two new council members and a mayor who are likely experiencing many of the same feelings I had four years ago. I want them to know that next few years will be some of the most rewarding of their careers.

Salt Lake City is an amazing city! Why is it so amazing? We are diverse – over 120 languages are spoken in our homes. We are inclusive – Salt Lake City was the first city in Utah to adopt a non-discrimination ordinance protecting LGBTQ residents. We are politically active – the 2015 election had the highest voter participation in recent memory, if not ever – 61% of District 6 residents voted! The primary reason Salt Lake City is great though is because all of us who choose to live here.

As I look forward for the next four years, there are key points on which we elected officials must work – infrastructure sustainability, maintaining our high-quality municipal services, improving economic development, and better engaging with city residents.

During my first induction speech I said: “Salt Lake City’s infrastructure is aging. Many of our neighborhood roadways are potholed, neighborhood curb and gutters are crumbling, and streetlights are neglected... This isn’t sustainable, and it’s not progressive. We need to do better.” While the City Council made an increased investment in Salt Lake City’s infrastructure during my first term, there is still a lot that needs to be done. We invested more money into our Capital Improvement Program budget and created a direct funding stream to replace Salt Lake City’s arterial streetlights with new, energy-efficient LED lights. These were all great steps forward, but we need to work hard to keep our commitment to improving our infrastructure.

During every budget discussion, the council and administration will be tempted to divert money and resources to other projects. Many of these projects will be great. They’ll be unique. They’ll be exciting. We will constantly need to remind each other and ourselves that these projects should not be funded at the expense of our infrastructure responsibilities.

In addition to our infrastructure commitment, we have done a better job strengthening our municipal services. I worked with my council colleagues on appointing some great new members to the Citizens Compensation Advisory Committee, which is tasked with making recommendations regarding employee compensation. We’ve worked well with our employee unions to effectively balance the needs of our municipal employees while retaining our commitment of fiscal responsibility to our tax-paying constituents. The Council has increased the number of well-trained police officers to help deal with crime in our neighborhoods throughout the city. I’m also pleased to say that we are working on having an increased East Side police presence as part of the new Sugar House fire station.

As with our increased infrastructure investment, we still have a lot to do to make our municipal services even better for our constituents. We must streamline some of our processes while ensuring that municipal ordinances are being followed so that new development will add to rather than detract from our neighborhoods. We must also listen to and heed the concerns of neighborhoods and residents by pursuing neighborhood-specific solutions rather than pushing one-size-fits-all policies that can damage the character of our neighborhoods and business nodes.

Salt Lake City is the capital city. We have a downtown that continues to revitalize. We have incredible cultural opportunities that rival the offerings of any major urban city. Our proximity to breathtaking mountain ranges offer clean water and recreation opportunities that other capital cities can only dream of. While there is so much positive to say about our offerings as the capital city, unfortunately we have slipped when it comes to economic development. The state of Utah is promoting the Silicon Slopes in Utah County, even though it's 45 miles away from the Salt Lake City International Airport. Many small and medium-sized businesses are relocating from downtown to suburban municipalities. Other suburban cities have developed shopping areas that pull customers away from traditional downtown locations. As the capital city, we MUST do better with attracting and retaining economic development opportunities.

To better attract and retain business we need to evaluate some of our policies and ordinances to see if the actual results match the desired results hoped for when the ordinances were first adopted. Are our decreased parking requirements, which make sense downtown, negatively impacting smaller residential business areas and surrounding neighborhoods? How can we work better with the Governor's Office of Economic Development, the Economic Development Corporation of Utah, the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, and other business organizations to attract and retain businesses in our manufacturing zones? Are our parking meter rates and time limits, which are meant to encourage parking stall turnover, instead discouraging people to visit and shop downtown? Creating new ordinances and policies are critical roles of the Salt Lake City Council, but we need to work together with the administration to regularly check back to see if the actual consequences meet what was originally intended.

Over the past four years the City Council has worked hard to improve our public engagement and outreach efforts. We've held formal public hearings in locations around the city. We have improved our district email newsletters and our council website. We're also working closely with Information Management on improving other constituent communications.

Great ideas and policies will not be effective if they are formed in a vacuum. Salt Lake City residents are well educated, civically minded, and ready and willing to participate. As elected officials we must be ready to change or abandon our own ideas if we are unable to bring our constituents along with us. Acting unilaterally or following limited public engagement will only decrease the public's faith in city government as well as our ability to lead effectively. It is our responsibility to articulate our positions, listen to public feedback, and ultimately make policy decisions for the city. While some will disagree with our decisions, I hope we can create an environment where residents will know they were heard and their opinions and positions were respected by us, even if they personally disagree with the outcome.

This is an exciting time in Salt Lake City. I want to formally congratulate Mayor Jackie Biskupski on her election. I've appreciated our conversations leading up to and since her election, and I appreciate her vision for our city. I'm also impressed with her choices for Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff. I have known and worked with both Patrick Leary and David Litvack for many years. I look forward to working with them now on behalf of Salt Lake City residents.

I also want to congratulate Derek Kitchen and Andrew Johnston on their elections. Districts 4 and 2 are in very capable hands with their representation. I look forward to working closely with both of them.

Thank you to Mayor Ralph Becker for his eight years in office. Your love of Salt Lake City was apparent during your two terms. I wish you the best in your future endeavors. Thanks also to Luke Garrott and Kyle LaMalfa who served their districts with passion.

As I conclude my remarks, I especially want to thank my wife, Karyn, my daughter, Sophie, and my son, Charlie Jr., for their constant support. They not only talked me in to running for the City Council five years ago, but have stuck with me ever since. They never complain about my long hours being in meetings, reading staff reports at home, and answering constituent correspondence. Their support has never wavered, and for that I am forever grateful. Thanks also to my parents, my sister and her family, my grandmother, and in-laws. I love you all.

Thanks to my campaign manager, Chase Clyde, who put up with me through another campaign, and to my campaign coordinator, Jordan Dyett. I thoroughly enjoyed working with you both.

Thanks also to my many volunteers who walked door to door with me, helped with neighborhood meetings, and talked to their friends and neighbors about why they should vote for me again.

I am extremely humbled by the residents of District 6 who overwhelmingly voted to re-elect me to represent them for another four years. I will continue to be available to you and really hope to hear from you. I appreciate your faith in me more than you will ever know.

In conclusion, I ask you to all to join with us so that we can effectively lead Salt Lake City towards another era of continued success. Help us to remember to reinvest in our city's infrastructure, to maintain and even better our municipal services, and to improve policies to strengthen our economic development. We appreciate your votes, but your job isn't done. Your elected officials will only be truly effective with your continued help, interest and involvement. Thank you all again for the opportunity to serve!