

## City Councilwoman Neely District 2 Inaugural Address



Good morning! And thank you to Mayor Gordon, Judge Song Ong, my fellow Council members and to all of District 2. My thanks also go out to my husband and two wonderful daughters for all of their support. And mom and dad, I wouldn't be here without you!

Four years in this position gives some perspective and makes me appreciate my second inauguration even more than the first. I am happy and honored to serve my community.

I am proudest of the strong partnerships we've formed to help guide and shape our growing community. I am proud of my relationships with the mayor and Council members and also proud to have developed a valued relationship with my good friend, Maricopa County Supervisor Andy Kunasek. We're working together on many issues for the benefit of all of the people we represent.

I can't imagine how anyone could help shape policy for our residents without the cooperation and collaboration of the neighborhood and homeowners' associations that form the foundation of any successful community.

I am very lucky to work with residents from neighborhoods such as Desert Ridge, Tatum Highlands, Tatum Ranch, Dove Valley Ranch, Dove Valley Estates, Country Trace, Tramonto, the Echo Mountain Neighborhood Coalition, the Village People Blockwatch and many, many more.

We now have all of our state legislators regularly working alongside us and we continue to focus on shared solutions to complex issues. We have more than 30-thousand acres of state trust land in District 2, and I can never say enough about the staff of the State Land Department, Director Mark Winkleman and his chief deputy, Richard Hubbard. Their cooperation has enabled us to better plan and prepare for the growing number of new residents moving into north Phoenix.

District 2 is also home to four Village Planning Committees – Paradise Valley, Deer Valley, Desert View and North Gateway. Thanks to our current chairs of these committees: Maureen Collins of Desert View, Sandra Stein of Paradise Valley, Dean Howard of North Gateway and Charles Ellis of Deer Valley. And thanks to our past chairs who have given so many hours to benefit their neighborhoods. Along with the other members, they make sure the voices of our existing neighborhoods are heard when it comes time to plan and develop new neighborhoods for the thousands of new residents moving to Phoenix each year. All the volunteers who serve on the Village Planning Committees are ensuring that the growth we do experience only adds to the quality of life we all enjoy in District 2. Citizens and committees like these are the backbone of the city.

In addition to our citizen volunteers, I would also like to thank some of our business and educational partners for the contributions they continue to make toward the economic and educational well-being of our community. Together, we've been able to ensure that our residents are receiving the best services possible. District 2 is blessed to have great corporate citizens who are willing to step forward to help the community throughout the year. Great examples are ST Microelectronics and its 100-thousand-dollar donation to the Hurricane Katrina relief effort and Sumco's efforts to improve the environment through emissions improvements made to school busses in the Paradise Valley Unified School District. The Westin Kierland Resort, J.W. Desert Ridge Marriott, Arizona Helping Hands and Wal-Mart also have made many contributions over the years that have benefited children in our community, through summer swim programs and basic necessities some children were living without. During the next four years, I look forward to a continuing relationship with business organizations like the North East Phoenix Business Alliance; the Mayo Hospital and Paradise Valley Hospital, developers like Vestar, the Ryan Companies and Landmark and perhaps most importantly, the Paradise Valley Unified School District, the Deer Valley Unified School District, the Cave Creek Unified School District and the Paradise Valley Community College.

We continue to work to attract quality businesses to move to District 2 from small to corporate companies and from everything from medical to financial to manufacturing. All of which will enhance our community.

What will the next four years bring to District 2?

They'll bring even more accomplishments that enhance the quality of life for all adults and children who come here to live the American dream. I promise that the next four years will build on the past four. With your help we made major strides toward providing more of the recreational amenities that define what a great city really is.

One of the highest priorities in my first term was increasing the amount of park space available to the residents of my district. As we continue to be one of the fastest growing areas of the city, it is important for us to step back a few paces and recognize the need to provide recreational and open spaces that can be enjoyed by our families for generations to come.

I am proud of my record in accomplishing this during the past four years, and pledge to continue this work. Consider what we now have in District 2 with the establishment of the Desert Broom Library, Dynamite Park, Tramonto Park, continued development of the Reach 11 Recreation Area, the purchase of 2,230 acres for preserve expansion in District 2, the all-important edge treatment guidelines for the preserves, securing of Arizona Sports and Tourism Authority funding for the lighting of sports fields in the Reach 11 and continued efforts to protect the scenic corridors throughout the district.

I am also very pleased of the strong efforts in the Palomino neighborhood. It has changed from a blighted community to a neighborhood where people are standing in line to buy new homes.

In the coming four years, I will continue working to balance our residential and business growth with the enhancement of our natural preserves and family recreation facilities. I will continue to ensure that generations yet to come will be able to enjoy the beauty of our Sonoran desert and the thrill of playing in the safe and secure confines of the best park system in the country.

I also want to touch on the crucial issue of public safety. This was a major goal of mine four years ago, and continues to be today. We worked hard to push for the development of a new police precinct at Cave Creek Road and Smokehouse Trail, to better serve our far north neighborhoods. With the recent city purchase of land there, we are well on our way to making this a reality, and I'm fully committed to the community that we will complete this project.

I'm pleased that we now have a new fire station in Desert Ridge and one soon to open in the Tramonto community. I'll keep pushing for increased public safety funds to further reduce response time throughout District 2. In addition, I will continue to help establish neighborhood block watches in our new communities while organizing new Fight Back programs, similar to the successful efforts in the Palomino neighborhood, Eagle Ridge, Campo Bello and our newest one, the North Tatum Fight Back. With each concern that residents bring to my attention, I look forward to finding solutions and creating stronger neighborhoods where we all would be proud to live.

I'm proud to say that I created the District 2 Liquor Task Force in order to ensure that existing establishments and applications for new liquor establishments are complying with all city requirements and not deterring from the quality of life in the area. It's been extremely successful in identifying problems and notifying prospective business owners that we will not tolerate any establishment operating without regard for the residents and the surrounding community.

As District 2 grows, we are faced with the challenges to meet the needs for infrastructure and natural resources such as streets, parks and a sustainable water supply and I pledge to continue to work on all of these issues. I applaud our past leaders and city staff for their diligent work in protecting our water sources and working to ensure we use our water wisely. But we cannot stop now, we must continue to be diligent about protecting our natural resources at the same time. These improvements are paid for by our residents and I'll continue to make sure that these funds are used to best serve the needs of the city.

The East Sonoran Parkway Committee made up of District 2 residents, is working right now toward a recommended alignment for a new roadway through the Sonoran Preserve connecting the eastern and western portions of the district. The committee is vital to make sure we meet the needs of the whole area the road will run through. I thank each of the members for their hard work and commitment.

Together with my fellow Council members, the mayor, City Manager Frank Fairbanks and city staff, we are all looking forward to the many exciting projects that will shape Phoenix's future.

The challenge to continue making Phoenix and District 2 the pride of Arizona is there and I accept it. From enhancing our roadways to increasing our public safety. From saving our beautiful desert preserves to providing recreational space for our families. From balancing our economic growth with the absolute finest in quality residential planning, I am looking forward to serving the residents of District 2 and the entire city of Phoenix for the coming four years.

Thanks again to the mayor, my fellow Council members, my family, the hardworking District 2 staff and friends. You have all contributed to the bright future that we all see now on the horizon.