



---

---

## **MAYOR GEORGE K. CHEN'S 2022 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS**

Good afternoon, everyone! On behalf of the City of Torrance and the Torrance City Council, thank you for joining me today. I'm truly excited and humbled to deliver my inaugural State of the City as your mayor.

Before I get started, I'd like to introduce all of my colleagues on the Torrance City Council, I ask that you hold your applause until I introduce all of the elected officials – Councilman Mike Griffiths, Councilman Jon Kaji, Councilwoman Sharon Kalani, Councilman Aurelio Mattucci, Councilman Asam Sheikh, and the newest to join the council is Councilwoman Bridgett Lewis. I'd also like to introduce our City Clerk, Rebecca Poirier, and City Treasurer – Tim Goodrich. I want to thank all of them for their dedication and efforts to work together. I know over the next four years, they will continue in helping me govern our great City – creating a bright future for Torrance!

I would also like to thank our City Manager – Aram Chaparyan, City Attorney –Patrick Sullivan, Assistant City Manager – Danny Santana, Assistant City Attorney Tatia Strader and the entire executive staff of our City. And a big thanks to all of our wonderful employees who continue to work behind the scenes with little fanfare. I also need to offer special thanks (I'm sure my colleagues will agree) to our entire administrative staff at City Hall, all of whom helped to make my transition from Councilman to Mayor so seamless.

Thank you also to Michael Smith, Jin Chun, and Christine Lee who helped organize my thoughts and words, and produced the video to share a little bit about who I am, what motivates me daily, and why I'm so passionate about Torrance.

Lastly and most importantly, special thanks to my wife Amy who is here today— and my two daughters for their unconditional love and support. It's because of you, who managed to make our home a warm and loving place, that enabled me to chase my dreams and pursue my goals.

Today, I'd like to share with you my Values, Vision, Courage and Commitment for the City of Torrance. As we come out of a historic pandemic and get back on our feet, I can tell you, I am optimistic about our future. Not just for our dedicated residents who love this community as much as I do, but for our valuable business community as well. Throughout the pandemic, each and every one of us weathered through some of the hardest times of our lives. But we survived, you're here today, and we're going to make our future brighter than ever. During a crisis, it's not about the disaster. It's about how we respond. As a City we took actions immediately, we pivoted quickly, and we moved into problem solving mode with the goal of keeping Torrance Moving Forward.

To understand my values, I have to take you back to my childhood and family. As a product of immigrant Taiwanese parents, I saw them sacrifice and struggle to provide the best possible foundation for my siblings and I. Growing up in a foreign country, learning a new language, adapting to new cultures, we had a clear understanding of what it meant to achieve the "American Dream". My parents came here in the late 60's, picking up odd jobs to make ends meet. They were looking for a better future for our family. They saw opportunity as many immigrant families did and they made a wonderful life for us. They showed my siblings and I what hard work, perseverance and dedication looked like. They were faithful. They were committed. I can still remember my father working at his auto repair shop where I would help in the summers or the many evenings I spent helping my family at their restaurant, "House of Chen". They were passionate about instilling core values that I'm so proud to continue to carry today.

I fell in love with sports at an early age. From the love of basketball to athletics in general, I became an avid runner. I love to exercise, participate in outdoor endurance activities. I try to stay consistent working out. It keeps me feeling alive. As a runner, I use that time as personal therapy, to decompress, clear my mind, and often ideas and solutions to various issues pop into my head. While I used to train for one marathon a year, now I run 3 half marathons a year instead, which give my knees a little break. And like running a marathon, I knew running for an elected office would be a challenging process as I had no experience in the area nor did I serve on a commission. I had to learn and train for the long game and apply my personal and professional experience to an entirely different field. As the video mentioned, once I retired from Raytheon, I knew that I wasn't finished. Actually, it was the end of the first half of life and the beginning of the second half, and it is different. The second half is very public

with the opportunity to serve my community, opening the window of my life, sharing what I believe in, and my commitment to providing the kind of leadership that will take us into the future.

In 2018, I was first elected onto the Torrance City Council with no political experience. My passion and my enthusiasm for this great City along with my life and professional experience was enough to win the seat. Then in 2020, I was again elected to serve and represent West Torrance in District 2 as their Councilmember. And now I am honored and humbled to serve as the first Mayor of Asian descent for this great City. I ran on the platform to guide the City into the future more fiscally stable while developing a technology and business innovation hub in Torrance. I plan to seek the best value solutions for the City to implement that will yield the greatest impact on public safety, finances, and quality of life.

On June 7th, the residents of Torrance elected a diverse group of leaders who sit beside me on the City Council. As a whole, we offer a wide range of knowledge and professional experience with common goals. We all want a safe and strong community, support our businesses, provide recreational and athletic opportunities for all ages, first-rate education for our kids and grand-kids, and a great vision of success for our Future. I'm proud to say I'm now a grandpa to two grandsons; so I'm laser focused not only on solving the problems of today, but also creating a vibrant future for them.

On August 9th, we opened up our City Council Chambers to the public once again, after nearly two years of meeting virtually for the safety of our community. We are confident, having our community back in our chambers will provide an opportunity to engage and get civically involved once again. We may not always agree on things, but this is a true platform to exercise our democracy.

This new council offers a balanced background and a wealth of experience. Our two new council members, who were elected on June 7th Jon Kaji in District #1 and Asam Sheikh in District #3, together offer more than 50 years of professional experience. Jon Kaji, a small business owner with deep roots in the Torrance community is focused on business attraction and retention. His connections domestically and internationally will serve this City well into the future. Asam Sheikh has 25 years under his belt at American Honda Motor Company. He has a background in finance and is known as a problem solver among his colleagues. He's also a lifelong student. He wasn't satisfied with just one Master's Degree; he needed to obtain a second. He and I share the common success story of living the American Dream. The City also re-elected Aurelio Mattucci for a second term to represent District #5. An Italian immigrant, who moved to the United States as a young child, continues to advocate for a cleaner and safer community. He is also known as "Mr. Clean." He is outspoken with strong convictions and he can

sometimes be very passionate and expressive, but I know it all comes from a place of love and commitment to this community. We have Sharon Kalani in District #4 who's been on the Council since 2020. She's had an extensive career in banking and currently works as a trusted advisor at Green Hills Memorial Park. If you know her, you know you can always count on her for a hug. She is compassionate, caring, and a life-long volunteer. Her community involvement includes the Torrance South Bay YMCA, Torrance Memorial along with various leadership roles on a number of committees. We also have Mike Griffiths in District #6 who was appointed to the City Council in 2014, and then elected in 2016, and again in 2020. He is our most senior member on the council. His advocacy for the City, for businesses and residents resonates with all of us. He is leading the effort to challenge Senate Bill 9, a state law that would strip local control over zoning for single-family homes and neighborhoods. Thank you for your continued effort to represent Torrance and our desire to maintain local control. Then on August 31st, we completed our Council with the appointment of Bridgett Lewis. She is the Manager of Security Operations at the Port of Long Beach. She oversees not only security operations at the nation's second busiest seaport, but also the operations at the Central California Maritime Coordination Center, housed at the Port's state of the art Security Command and Control Center. Rounding out our elected leadership, we have City Clerk Rebecca Poirier who ran unopposed, which tells you something about how she's doing. And finally, our newly elected City Treasurer Tim Goodrich who as many of you may remember is a former Torrance City Councilman.

The make-up of our elected leaders is a great reflection of our community. The diversity among us between personal and professional experience, cultural backgrounds and all that we bring to the dais, I couldn't have handpicked a better team to represent our great City!

I would be remiss if I did not thank former Mayor and colleague Patrick Furey for all of his steadfast leadership these past 8 years. While he could not be here today, representing the Furey team is his wife Terry. She knows first-hand, especially during the pandemic, Mayor Furey was level headed, always practical and put the community's health and well-being above all else. When the election was over, he shared words of encouragement, passing on what felt like the "City Hall Torch".

We experienced a historic two and a half years of economic challenges, lives lost and at one point a complete shutdown of businesses and schools. It undeniably took a toll on our economy, our businesses, our workforce, our students, and families. But as I mentioned before, we have to keep Torrance Moving Forward. As we rebuild into the future, I want to assure you, we will be conservative spenders and we will work to put the City's finances back on track.

Thanks to our City's Finance Department led by our brilliant Sheila Poisson, we are moving in the right direction. While I did not support Measure SST because of the idea of raising taxes and the implications to our business owners and shoppers, the Torrance voters voiced their support by passing the measure by 54.9 percent. So, beginning October 1st, the City will adopt a new ordinance establishing a half-cent sales tax bringing it to 10 percent. This equates to 50 cents per \$100 dollar purchase. This tax will NOT be collected on items such as prescription medication or groceries. 100 percent of the revenue will come back to the City to remain here locally. This will help to maintain City services, such as public safety, improve aging infrastructure, support our senior services, and address the growing epidemic of homelessness. Staff estimates that nearly \$18 M will be generated annually. Our Finance Department will make available to the public an annual independent audit report. A Committee will receive reports on revenues and expenditures from the tax as well as reviewing proposed spending plans to ensure full transparency.

As your Mayor, I have personally met with and interacted with countless members of our business community – large and small – to encourage their efforts and to offer the support of the City of Torrance. Thanks to many of you who are here today, I'm looking forward to working closely together to keep Torrance Moving Forward.

One of the first signs of an improving economy is business growth and the strength of our workforce. Just in the last 3 months, Torrance issued 142 new business licenses with an additional 218 licenses approved for work done by contractors doing business in Torrance. Unemployment rates here in Torrance for the second quarter stands at 3.7%. Each quarter, we're seeing significant declines. This time last year, we stood at 8.2%. In 2020 at the start of the pandemic, unemployment rates hit a record high at 16.5% here in Torrance. Now, we have the lowest numbers throughout the South Bay. That is great news!

Our Ribbon-cutting partnership with the Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce is bustling. I've been invited to ribbon cutting ceremonies, grand openings, and anniversary celebrations weekly. Since July, there have been 7 ribbon cuttings with 7 more scheduled in the coming weeks. I'm not sure I have enough ties to rotate to wear for all of these great upcoming events!

Since taking office, I have been focused on energizing the business relationships we share both locally AND internationally. I'm thrilled to share that recently we've hosted visits by the Japan Consul General of LA and the Japanese Business Association at City Hall. Next week, we will host the Korea Consul

General of LA with the goal of strengthening our relationships, encourage businesses to enter the market, promote cultural exchanges and even study abroad programs. And, in November, the Taiwanese American Chamber of Commerce of Greater LA is planning to visit. Thank you to Torrance Chamber CEO, Donna Duperron and her amazing staff for hosting this event today. You are a great ally to our City and to our business community. I look forward working closely with you over the next four years.

I am pleased to tell you that the City of Torrance remains strong and I, along with my colleagues, am aware of our challenges.

Integral departments within our City like our Torrance Police and Fire Departments are what continues to rank Torrance one of the safest and best places to live and work. I want to thank our many men and women in uniform who protect life and property, who make the daily sacrifices so that all of us can sleep with ease. Whether they're wearing a Police or Fire uniform, they're all working towards providing a safer community for our residents and for our business partners. While we've had some rough hurdles recently, we continue to keep Torrance Moving Forward. Thanks to the leadership of Torrance Police Chief Jay Hart, we are rebuilding and embracing change. The Chief is working in collaboration with State Attorney General Rob Bonta to ensure the appropriate steps are taken to achieve justice. I spoke with Mr. Bonta last weekend at an API Elected Official Summit and he told me how appreciative he is of Chief Hart and the collaboration with TPD. Chief Hart said, "Misconduct where officers fall below the standard will not be tolerated. We will do better." Thank you for your steadfast leadership and guidance. In line with Chief Hart's vision of 21st Century Policing, the Department hosts Principal Policing classes for all sworn and civilian personnel. This procedural justice and implicit bias training consists of 6 areas that focus on policing approaches that emphasize respect, listening, neutrality and trust while recognizing and addressing implicit biases that can be barriers to these approaches. Torrance Police is one of the first agencies to develop the course, get it certified by the State of California and require all Police Department personnel to take it. TPD is also proud to participate in the FBI's National Incident Based Reporting System. It collects detailed data, gives context to specific crimes and provides analytics needed to support law enforcement agencies. As the standard for national data collection, this system represents a substantial shift in the way Torrance Police reports crime. It also helps to better inform the public about the nature of crime in our City, providing detailed, accurate, and meaningful information related to the crime. Our officers continue to serve this community with courage and tact and I commend the department for your sacrifices.

I'm also thankful to the Torrance Fire Department for their community involvement. Led by our interim Fire Chief Dave Dumais, they are a shining light within their field. Chief Dumais along with our Deputy Fire Marshall Richard Kazandjian heads the Community Risk Reduction division. This division is recognized by the State for their strong leadership and for providing and leading regulatory refinery oversight, not only in Torrance but across the State. During the recent California Unified Program Annual Training Conference, Torrance Fire was recognized as a leading agency in the effort of refinery safety. TFD is also both Accredited and ISO Class 1 rated. Only 1 of 5 departments in the State and only 1 of 113 departments worldwide hold BOTH designations. And this is good news for all of you. Having a fire department with an ISO Class 1 rating lowers insurance rates for its residents and businesses. Accredited agencies like Torrance Fire are described as being community and outcome-focused, data-driven, strategic-minded, well organized, properly equipped, and properly staffed and trained. That sounds like our Torrance Fire Department, right? The Fire Department's Patient Transportation Program has expanded their capabilities to maintain continuous care from the moment residents dial 9-1-1 until the transfer of care in the hospital. And while the cost of the ambulance transportation hasn't changed, thanks to this program, we are now able to retain the funds rather than paying a global transportation company. As the Department continues to strive to improve their capabilities, like the Patient Transportation Program, there are several advancements launching shortly. With a focus on efficiency, we will be utilizing state-of-the-art technology to improve services to ensure the appropriate resources are provided during emergencies.

As I mentioned earlier, homelessness has been a growing concern for all of the State of California. One third of the state's homeless population resides in Los Angeles County alone. The pandemic exacerbated the issue and we saw a startling rise in the number of people living on the streets. City staff recognized this was a growing concern that needed to be addressed. And let me tell you, there isn't a single City in Southern California untouched by this crisis. So what did Torrance do? We went to work. With the support of the Social Services Commission along with my colleagues and I, City staff designed a plan and program to offer temporary housing, sought funding from our local legislators and 3290 Temporary Housing Village was built. This is the product of hard work and commitment by the staff and the community. While we're not the first to provide a solution to the unhoused, our 40-unit tiny homes village was built in record time. And thanks to LA County Supervisor Janice Hahn, Assemblyman Al Muratsuchi, Congresswoman Maxine Waters and Congressman Ted Lieu, Senators Alex Padilla and Diane Feinstein along with the South Bay Cities Council of Governments. They understood our mission and they went to bat for us. We opened our doors on July 5th, and within the first few weeks, we were

at capacity. We hope that providing housing stability will be a life changing experience. Thanks to Harbor Interfaith who manages the village, offering resources and services to everyone at 3290. Already five residents at 3290 are now employed in full or part time jobs and 6 have been matched to a Permanent Supportive Housing site in LA County, which is expected to open later this year. The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority or (LAHSA) released the result of the 2022 Homeless Count just last week. And Torrance along with some of our neighboring communities who are also addressing the issue of homelessness may be doing something right. Service Planning Area 8, which covers the South Bay, showed a decrease within our region, and a 5 percent decline here in Torrance. While that's great news, there is still more work to do. We know the village will not solve the epidemic of homelessness, but it is addressing the crisis with tangible solutions, offering opportunities to those unhoused to change the course of their lives, for the better.

On Monday, the City hosted a meeting with State Attorney General Bonta, Los Angeles County Supervisor Hahn, Assemblyman Muratsuchi and Senator Steven Bradford to discuss the future of hosting a monthly Homeless Court in Torrance. The program is designed to reach those individuals who are most resistant to accepting needed services often due to chronic mental illness or addiction, with the ultimate goal of helping them get into permanent housing and off the streets. Open cases are addressed with a judge in a less threatening environment with many different service providers on site as well. Thank you to Supervisor Hahn for being a champion of many of our Torrance initiatives. She has committed nearly a quarter of a million dollars to help fund this pilot program and we are thrilled to receive the support.

As we continue to evolve, I'm excited to see these kind of positive changes happening in our community. Our City has gone from oil fields, to manufacturing, to clean technology, and we will continue to grow. One thing the pandemic did not slow down is growth in business. Torrance has become an epicenter of technology with companies like Epirus, 3 DEO, Varda Space, Stellant Systems, Avanti, Eravant, and Intellisense just to name a few that now call Torrance home.

There's also exciting developments happening at the Torrance Gateway Property owned by the Sares Regis Group, as Phase Two is now 100 percent leased. Industries like aerospace, manufacturing, sporting goods and biotech will soon occupy five buildings totaling 730,000 square feet of office space.

The City's Office of Economic Development helped launched a Technology Committee this spring, acting as an advisory group to the City. Among the 30-member committee, there is vast range of



representation from companies like American Honda, Blue Robotics, 3 DEO, Bachem, Polypeptide, Rivian, 68 Labs, Totex, Celestron, PBF Energy and many more. The committee was formed to develop strategies to attract and retain high tech businesses, create tools to better market Torrance for new and rapidly changing technology and provide the support necessary for tech businesses to thrive in Torrance along with offering higher paying jobs. This will provide another avenue for business networking and potential partnerships, in addition to City services you may not yet be aware of or take advantage of.

And earlier this month, the Community Development Department led by the pragmatic and down to earth Michelle Ramirez launched a new Property Rehabilitation Rebate Program. The program offers financial incentives for renovation, restoration, and preservation of the exterior facade of privately owned businesses. Funded by the Office of Economic Development, improvements can be related to exterior painting, door and window repair, anti-graffiti for glass windows and doors just to name a few. Approved licensed businesses could obtain a rebate of up to 50% of the cost of facade improvements. You can reach out to the Community Development Department at [CDDInfo@TorranceCA.Gov](mailto:CDDInfo@TorranceCA.Gov). This is just one of the many advantages of doing business in Torrance and one of the many ways we're keeping Torrance Moving Forward.

We're proud to have high tech, forward thinking businesses such as Landi Renzo call Torrance home. In line with the City's strategic plan of Stewardship of the Environment, Torrance proudly supports the efforts of the Landi Renzo and Southern California Gas partnership to reduce emissions and move towards a more sustainable future, not only for our City, but our region and the world. This initiative fits in line with one of our popular programs, including the One Mile One Charger Project, which addressed the lack of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging stations within the city nearly 8 years ago.

When people ask, "Why Torrance?" The answer is balance, opportunity, proximity, and the many advantages of calling Torrance home. We have competitive utilities and business license fees, a portfolio of major industries, skilled labor pools, proximity to Los Angeles and Long Beach Ports, LAX, Zamperini Field, and freeway access. Not that we need the reminders but Torrance continues to make various "Best of Lists" in every industry. Del Amo Fashion Center was listed #12 as one of the best malls in America for 2022 for its unique architecture, a diverse selection of shops and for their many restaurant options. MoneyTalksNews.com listed Torrance as one of the best cities to raise a family, thanks to the many wonderful resources available. And CaliforniaCityNews.org recently listed Torrance as one of the best small cities for diversity. Torrance is proud to carry a reputation of being a business friendly customer-centered City. And just the other day I read [Go.Verizon.com](http://Go.Verizon.com)'s report of the Top

Business Savvy Cities to start a business, and of all the cities in the country, Torrance topped that list at #6.

Torrance's excellent year-round climate, beautiful open spaces, theatre and arts, nationwide rankings for safety and livability and excellent schools continue to put Torrance on the map.

One important method of Moving Torrance Forward is our mobility and access to public transportation. Thanks to Torrance Transit, led by the tenacious Kim Turner and her remarkable team they help provide 2 million trips this last fiscal year, that's an 11.3% increase from the previous year. Torrance Transit continues to increase service reliability and communication to customers with the implementation of real time bus service adjustment and detours on the Transit App, Google Maps, and on other customer interface mobile applications. With the opening of the new Mary K. Giordano Transit Center, hopefully later this year, the new state of the art transportation hub will help reduce single occupancy vehicle trips, improve regional mobility connecting Torrance Transit routes with other regional providers in the Transit Terminal. This facility, named after former Assistant City Manager Mary G. is a true testament of her dedication, hard work, determination, and commitment to the City of Torrance as an employee and resident. I think she would have been so proud to finally see this parcel of land developed into this impressive, state of the art facility. The center is located at 465 Crenshaw Boulevard and we can't wait for it to be fully operational!

Another important item coming our way is the proposed Metro Line C Project. This project will impact our businesses, all of you, and all of our commuters. Los Angeles Metro is proposing two options of providing a light rail to pass through Torrance. The first alignment is the Metro Railroad Right-of-Way Alignment where the train would utilize the existing railroad right of way to connect with the Mary K. Giordano Transit Center. This alignment is fully funded and is part of LA Metro's top priority projects to be completed by the 2028 Olympics. The second option, which the City strongly opposes, is an elevated train along Hawthorne Boulevard down to 190th street, before entering the railroad right of way. This WILL create significant impact to businesses and residents in Torrance. This option is not fully funded and would further delay the project past 2030. We invite all of you, as stakeholders to join the upcoming Transportation Committee Meeting to learn more about this project and the impacts it will have on our community. Members from LA Metro will provide a presentation on the C-Line, and we will have staff available to answer any questions you may have. The meeting will be hosted inside the LeRoy J. Jackson Council Chamber and take place on Wednesday, September 28th from 6 - 7:30 p.m., It will be

presented in a hybrid mode with in-person and virtual options available. I encourage every one of you to join us, in person or remotely.

The strength of Torrance is measured by how well we respond to the challenges and how well we overcome the obstacles ahead of us. It's having the courage to make difficult decisions and understanding the needs of the community.

As we move forward, Torrance Unified School District remains the cornerstone of excellent education. Congratulations to our Superintendent Dr. Tim Stowe, our Torrance School Board and all of our teachers and administrators for their efforts. I am so pleased to see TUSD students thrive and succeed, year after year. Torrance students continue to be recognized for accomplishments in academics and athletics, and the district for its enrichment programs such as service learning and environmental efforts. Torrance launched its Spanish Dual Immersion Program in the district at Carr and Torrance Elementary Schools. This educational model that integrates native English speakers and native speakers of a target language in the same classroom offer children an opportunity to become fluent in two languages while developing academic skills in core subjects. Did you know TUSD was also voted "Best District" in the South Bay by the Daily Breeze for the 2nd year in a row? They continue to be recognized for exceptional and innovative educational programs, Career Technical Education, Early College Program at North High School, world-class facilities, and state of the art auditoriums. The Torrance Aquatics Center is currently being used as the official training center for the U.S. Men's National Water Polo Team. The faculty, administrators, and parents who support our students should be applauded for their tenacity, dedication and commitment to education, and to our children.

The City's Social Services Commission also partnered up with TUSD this summer to coordinate a Back to School Supplies Drive. Families in need or experiencing housing instability were able to select supplies for their children to prepare for the academic year. Nearly 50 families were touched by this outreach as the public showed an outpouring support for this drive.

We're so fortunate to also have one of the best community colleges in the region. Lead by Superintendent and President of El Camino College, Dr. Brenda Thames, each semester, nearly 30 thousand students enroll at the college to work towards one of nearly 96 programs taught by exceptional faculty. They've developed a reputation for providing an environment that supports opportunities for student success. They are among the top 5 California State University transfer schools. And with their Nursing program, they are ranked among the best in the state and nationally.

Torrance has always provided a place for students and families to thrive. And thanks to the Community Services Department lead by the innovative John La Rock, we continue to support our youth and adults with wonderful park spaces to play along with recreational programs. In fact, tomorrow, the Torrance Library will celebrate the grand re-opening of El Retiro Library. After some renovations this summer, this community resource is now back, better than ever.

Torrance youth continue to impress me with their excellence and spirit of giving, and it inspires me to continue to explore different ways to partner with them. We have athletes ranging in all ages and sports representing Torrance in tournaments across the country. I've always said no matter what place you come in, as long as your heart is in it, you're all winners in my book. Speaking of winners, I want to applaud the LA Galaxy and their ongoing support for youth sports in the City of Torrance. Earlier this year, we renamed the soccer field adjacent to the Civic Center the "LA Galaxy Sports Complex". We also refurbished the roller rink, which is now called the Sports Complex at Wilson Park. This year we hosted Rugby Week in Torrance. We welcomed players from the HSBC World Rugby Seven Series as they battled it out for the championship. As the Summer Olympics head back to Los Angeles in 2028, these amenities for our youth and youth sports will remain a big draw for the region.

Speaking of quality of life, Torrance is fortunate to have so many great hospitals and medical centers to serve the needs of our community. According to U.S. News and World Report Torrance Memorial Medical Center ranks #5 in the L.A. and O.C. Region. They're also ranked in the top 3% of best hospitals throughout California. Across town, Providence Little Company of Mary was named among Newsweek's World Best Hospitals in 2022. They also received Pacific Neuroscience Institute's National Stroke Award this year. Kaiser Permanente and UCLA Health with facilities in Torrance also rank among the best for their many patient-care services. With those hospitals and so many other medical facilities, Torrance can certainly hold claim to the title "Health Care Capital of Los Angeles County."

Now if you've driven down Hawthorne Boulevard or Pacific Coast Highway, you may have noticed a "little" road construction. The Public Works Department lead by the focused and results-driven Craig Bilezerian is hard at work continuing the "PCH at Hawthorne Boulevard Intersection Improvement Project" which started in 2021. It is anticipated to be complete early next year. While the congestion and construction may be inconvenient at the moment, soon we will have widened streets, dual left turn lanes and a dedicated right turn lane in all four directions. This will provide better traffic flow as well as safer driving conditions for our commuters. Speaking of streets, the Streetscape Division of the Public

Works Department has planted 288 trees and 2,600 feet of new landscape in our center medians just this year.

The Torrance Airport Stormwater Project is also on the horizon and currently in the design phase. It's anticipated to capture 55 acre-feet of stormwater and urban runoff per year. It will capture, clean and reuse this precious resource.

Speaking of the airport, I'm happy to report that all seven noise monitors are recording and storing data now at Zamperini Field. These tools will allow staff to use the system to investigate complaints and follow up with any violators of the City's noise ordinance.

If you traveled this summer, you may have noticed busy airports, hotels and many more cars on the road. Torrance continues to be a center for tourism and visitors. With our California Welcome Center at Del Amo Fashion Center, the shopping center remains one of the top destinations in our City. Del Amo officials shared that their sales are outperforming 2019, which is their benchmark as their last "stabilized" year. Business is strong and their leasing activities continue to be busy. Looking ahead, several popular restaurants will expand their footprint as they open their newest location at Del Amo including MB Grille, North Italia, Kitchen of Korea, Keisuke Ramen, and Sweet Greens. And soon you'll be able to shop from retailers including Aeropostale, Pyscho Bunny, and Top Canvas just to name a few. Our Office of Economic Development continues to forge opportunities with the Torrance Visitor Bureau to allow more people to Discover Torrance. Our hotels, restaurant, and brewery scene are Instagram worthy and continue to be a driving destination point for tourists. And I just read Torrance Chamber board member Vince Giuliano and his fantastic restaurant Gaetano's was named Daily Breeze Reader's Choice winner for Best Italian Food. Congratulations on being a fan favorite, it's really no surprise. And congratulations on opening Piccini Italian Takeout earlier this year. Here's the story of a business owner who saw the challenges everyone faced with being stuck with limited take-out options during the pandemic. He decided it was time to develop a new kind of take-out option. Torrance has an amazing selection of restaurants and cuisines, which are fan favorites to many. If you haven't been, both are a must try in Torrance.

So, what's ahead? The City of Torrance will soon be seeking proposals from experienced and professional firms to give our Citywide Municipal Website an update.

And in just a few short weeks, we will launch the City's official APP on both the iPhone and Android systems. It will provide access to service requests, inquiries, notifications, and much more, just by the press of a button.

In less than a month, The City of Torrance, in conjunction with the Torrance Social Services Commission will host a hybrid celebration. An in-person Veterans Day Appreciation Luncheon and Resource Fair is scheduled for October 21st with a virtual celebration to be held November 6th through the 12th.

And looking ahead, the Torrance Sister City Association will celebrate 50 years of promoting friendship, goodwill, and understanding between the City of Torrance and the City of Kashiwa, Japan. Since 1973, the international relationship now spans generations, and the goal of TSCA is to provide resources for enhancing this people-to-people interaction. I want to offer a special thanks to the Torrance Sister City Association and all of their volunteers for their efforts with this phenomenal program and for continuing this amazing tradition.

We have a lot to look forward to in the coming months. And I look forward to leading this City with virtue, authenticity, and humility.

I want to thank you all once again for joining me today to share with you what is in process, development, direction, and in store for Torrance. With your help and guidance, I know that we can continue to be trailblazers in our path to building relationships, partnerships, and economic development in our great City. Why Torrance? Each of you have a stake in that answer. Each of you provide a reason for people to want to move to Torrance, visit, shop, travel and check out the "Why Torrance" experience. We have history, character, inspired leadership, committed families, excellent public safety and schools, top-notch hospitals, great neighborhoods and open spaces. Our businesses are rebounding and thriving in the post-covid era and there are many great opportunities ahead of us.

The great UCLA Men's Basketball coach, John Wooden said his father taught him to live by the adage, "Make each day your masterpiece."

So I invite you to join me and "make each of your days a masterpiece too" and together let's keep Torrance Moving Forward.

Thank you for allowing me to share my State of the City of Torrance with you.