



Good afternoon, everyone! On behalf of the City of Torrance and the Torrance City Council, thank you for joining me today. I am truly excited and humbled to deliver my second State of the City address 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 in attendance today – Representing District 1, Jon Kaji, Representing District 2, Bridgett Lewis, Representing District 3, Asam Sheikh, Representing District 4, Sharon Kalani, Representing District 5, Aurelio Mattucci, and Representing District 6, Mike Griffiths. I'd also like to introduce our City Clerk Rebecca Poirier, and City Treasurer Tim Goodrich. Let's give them a round of applause.

I want to thank all of them for their dedication and efforts to work together. Already in our first year, we've advanced important initiatives and created policies to improve the quality of life not only for our Torrance residents but for our business community as well. In fact, I believe it goes beyond that, I know each of my colleagues have a deep sense of commitment, purpose, and desire to make Torrance the greatest place to live in Southern California.

I would also like to thank our City Manager – Aram Chaparyan, Assistant City Manager – Danny Santana, City Attorney –Patrick Sullivan - and the entire executive staff of our City along with all of our wonderful employees who continue to work behind the scenes to keep the City running as efficiently and smoothly as possible.

Thank you to our staff in the Office of Cable and Community Relations who helped organize my thoughts and words, and who produced the video to show the many ways we are **Sowing the Seeds for Success.**

Lastly and most importantly, special thanks to my wife Amy – and my two daughters for their unconditional love and support throughout this journey.

It's hard for me to believe it's been 364 days since I gave my inaugural State of the City address? This time last year, we could see the light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel. In May of this year, the World Health Organization finally declared an end to the global Public Health Emergency. For more than 3 years, our City showed remarkable resilience, innovation and commitment confronting the challenges of the pandemic. Unprecedented obstacles, disruptions in our lives, our livelihood, our children, their development, there was not a person untouched by this horrific health crisis. I would be remiss if I did not applaud our past elected officials for their unwavering guidance through the most challenging time of our lives and helping us get to where we are today. They brought out the determined spirit of Torrance that truly shined within our community.

I've seen over the course of my first year in office a number of passionate council meetings, 26 since this time last year, many heated conversations and many memorable City events, and in the end, that is what strengthens the fabric of our community, the ability to share our opinions, our views, our ideologies all while listening with respect and understanding of our differences. This builds a brighter future for all, expressing independent ideas and the ability to move on once the votes are cast. We even conducted Council Meetings prior to Halloween and Christmas in full costume to demonstrate our togetherness and ability to have fun while conducting business. That's what makes **US TORRANCE**.

Today, I'd like to share with you some tangible highlights of my first year in office as I continue to serve the greatest city in the region. Actually, it's not just the greatest City in the region, in my humble opinion, Torrance is actually the **HEART of the SOUTH BAY**.

In 2022, I ran on the platform to guide the City into the future more fiscally stable than before, all while developing a technology and business innovation hub in Torrance. While our City is guided by the leadership of my colleagues and I on the Council, it's truly our City employees who play a key role in the success of our City. **THEY ARE TORRANCE**.

Thanks to the work of our Finance Department, the City's Fiscal Year 2022 to 2023 Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Plan was awarded the Government Finance Officers Association's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, that's a mouthful...the first time in the City's history.

This honor is given to state and local governments who prepare a budget document that meets program rating criteria and are able to use it as a policy document, operations

guide, financial plan, and communications device. It also reflects the GFOA's best practices on budgeting, transparency, and planning. Our Standard & Poor's or (S & P) Credit Rating improved from "Double A Negative" to "Double A Stable" and just recently, the City Council adopted a balanced budget for the 2023 to 2024 fiscal year. This will be the first time since the pandemic that the City will not have to make any significant budget cuts. The Citywide Budget currently stands at nearly half a billion dollars, this allows us to dedicate funds to improving public services, programs, and safety for our community. Do you remember when our city's reserves were down to \$585 thousand? And we are now projecting reserves of \$58 Million dollars, do you know how hard that is to do? To move 2 digits to the right? Our financial ratings are moving up. And that's huge!

Eleven months ago, under the leadership of the newly elected City Treasurer, the City is able to report \$181.2 Million in new Investment Purchases compared to just \$20.8 Million the year prior, \$6.7 Million in Investment Earnings compared to \$1.2 Million the year prior, yielding 4.2 percent, compared to 1.1 percent last year. Are you seeing the trend here?

The City Council also appointed 7 members to its newly established Measure SST Citizen Oversight Committee. They are now tasked with verifying that funds are used as approved by the City Council. I was not in favor of Measure SST, the half-cent sales tax the voters approved. However, we're exceeding our projected \$18 Million dollar annual tax revenue, and actually anticipating closer to \$23 Million dollars. This will come back to the City and remain here locally. So, what do all these numbers mean? It means the Financial Health of Torrance is trending up. Our City's budget is stable and balanced. It means we are spend-conscious. We are hiring. Businesses are opening here in Torrance, people are spending money, and Torrance's economic landscape continues to thrive. Our partnerships with businesses like yours have been instrumental in creating a resilient foundation for growth and opportunity.

Just a few weeks ago the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation announced that Torrance is one of five finalists named for the "Most Business Friendly City" Eddy Awards. This coveted award recognizes Cities in Los Angeles County who continue to provide business resiliency resources, assistance, and support to the local economy. Another affirmation that we are the... **HEART of the South Bay**. The award ceremony takes place at SoFi stadium on Wednesday, November 8th, regardless if we win, it is a great reflection of our City's commitment to economic development and our efforts to champion the WhyTorrance experience to existing businesses as well as to attract potential companies considering Torrance as their new home. We've seen the firsthand

power of collaboration as our City departments and local businesses work hand in hand to create an environment conducive to growth.

Our commitment to streamlining permitting processes, investing in essential infrastructure, and providing resources for workforce development has facilitated your successes and enabled our local economy to flourish. Just in the last 8 months, Torrance issued 542 new business licenses totaling 9,272 issued throughout the City.

Another great aspect of Torrance is the ease of requesting records and documents through the City Clerk's Office. Now you can efficiently search through records such as past City Council and Commission Agenda Packets, Minutes, Resolutions, Ordinances, Contracts, along with Permit Records. Staff is also working to prepare for the March 5, 2024 election which is just 6 months away.

According to the California Employment Development Department, The City's unemployment numbers continue to trend downward back to pre-pandemic levels. As of July 2023, we stand at 4.1 percent, still one of the lowest in the County and South Bay region.

Torrance is the epicenter of technology with companies like Moog, Mercury, Eravant, Intellisense, Epirus, and Navitas just to name a few that call Torrance home.

There are also exciting developments happening at the Torrance Gateway Property owned by the Sares Regis Group as tenants begin to move in. Space and defense manufacturer Hadrian, along with Yonex, a sporting goods company and world technology leader in badminton, tennis, and golf, and AIT Transportation Logistics, a supply chain solutions company and door to door solutions who are now occupying five buildings totaling 730,000 square feet of office space. Specialty medical offices continue to open their facilities in Torrance, and Biotech and Bioscience firms continue to expand their capabilities as evident by Bachem, Polypeptide, Sakura Finetek and others.

Has anyone heard of Hermosa Brewing Company? Well, they've expanded so fast that they have operations in Torrance now that include manufacturing and a tasting room. Other companies like DSV who provide and manage supply chain solutions for thousands of companies every day are more than doubling their size here in our City going from 140,000 square foot space to 375,000 square feet. If you love Dim Sum, we've added Lunasia at Rolling Hills Plaza to complement Din Tai Fung at Del Amo Fashion Center along with additional new restaurants in the pipeline coming to the Village Del Amo Center.

Our partnerships with businesses like each of yours has been instrumental in creating a resilient foundation for growth locally and abroad. This past year, we welcomed a multitude of new businesses like Dave's Hot Chicken, Perspire Sauna Studio, CTBC Bank, and HOTWORX. Del Amo Fashion Center is one of the top sales producing malls in the nation, out-performing malls larger in size. Not only did we celebrate the arrival of North Italia, MB Grille, SweetGreens, we also celebrated the Grand Opening of Nike Del Amo. And soon, the highly anticipated Apple Store will open their newest location at Del Amo Fashion Center.

Innovative startups like Arc Boats that moved from Inglewood to Torrance is growing at lightning speed. They design, manufacture, and sell one of the most advanced high performance Electric Boats in the industry with the ambitious goal of electrifying all watercraft. And they're building them right here in Torrance.

The City's Office of Economic Development continues to work with the City Council approved Technology Committee, which acts as an advisory group to the City. Among the 30-members, there is vast range of representation from companies including American Honda, Blue Robotics, 3 DEO, Bachem, 68 Labs, Celestron, AuroraIT, BQE Software, Partners Engineering, Pathways to Stem Cell Science, 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 group provides another avenue for business networking and potential partnerships, in addition to City services you may not yet be aware or take advantage of. Just one more reason we're considered the **HEART of the South Bay**.

In line with the City's strategic plan of Stewardship of the Environment, American Honda Motor unveiled their Stationary Hydrogen-Powered Fuel-Cell Generator as they lead the transition to alternative energy sources. We cannot bank 100% on electric vehicles. Sustainability is key for a successful future. We must be dedicated to promoting responsible development that respects our environment and encourage conservation of our natural resources.

When people ask, what is the **WhyTorrance** experience, it's the first rate service you get at the City. 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. Niche.com recently listed Torrance #34 Best Cities to raise a Family, #12 in the nation for best ranked public schools,

and #7 as the healthiest places to live in America. App-Brain ranked our new mobile app as one of the best to use for travel and local services, one of the top 100 places to live on the West Coast, best places to live if you love the outdoors...the list goes on. Whether you're a sun seeker, nature lover, weekend warrior, or just love the proximity to all of life's necessities, including one of the highest producing Costco's in the nation, I'm not sure what more you could ask for.

Another part of my campaign when I ran for Mayor included the focus on energizing the business relationships, we share both locally AND internationally. We've hosted a number of meetings and tours of our great City to Consul Generals of Pakistan, Austria, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. We've also hosted delegates from Hwaseong, South Korea, Hsingchu City Government Education Department of Taiwan, the Council for International Business Relations Support from Armenia, and that's just to name a few. And can I tell you, the common theme when they come to our City of their first impression of Torrance is the City's beauty and cleanliness. That is a reflection of our City workers who ensure our landscape and roads are well maintained. It's also a reflection of our business partners who also continue to invest in the curb appeal of our City. We look forward to expanding and growing those relationships locally and abroad and **Sowing the Seeds For Future Success.**

Speaking of future success, this year we launched a new Friendship Cities Program to partner with Cities abroad to pursue business opportunities, foreign direct investment, commerce, trade, tourism, and to present ready-made infrastructure to leverage the development of new businesses and economic development in our City. In just a few short weeks, the City Council will embark on an international trip to first, commemorate our 50th Anniversary with our Sister City in Kashiwa Japan before we head to Hwaseong, South Korea to sign our 3rd Friendship Cities Agreement. Hwaseong is home to Corporate Headquarters of Samsung and Hyundai. In addition to exploring overseas business development opportunities, the City has been moving forward with exploration of improvements here at home as recommended in the Downtown Revitalization. Some of the enhancements include improved lighting, additional street furniture and wayfinding signage. Building on the success of the Discover Torrance Tourism Business Improvement District and also recommended in the Downtown Revitalization Plan.

Another organization that continues to support the business community is the Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce. Thank you to Donna Duperron and her team for supporting our businesses, whether it's providing networking opportunities, business advocacy, workshops and seminars, business referral and hosting community events like ribbon

cutting ceremonies, grand openings, informational gatherings, and celebrations like this one today. Last month, we participated in the Ribbon Cutting for the Genesis of South Bay Auto Dealership, the luxury line of Hyundai. That's just 1 of 26 ribbon cuttings in the last year.

The Chamber is not only an integral part of the City's economic development footprint, but so is the City's need for safe and secure streets and neighborhoods. Thanks to the Torrance Police and Fire Departments, we continue to rank as 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.

Thanks to the leadership of Torrance Police Chief Jay Hart, we are rebuilding and utilizing tools of the 21st Century. Our officers continue to serve this community with courage and tact, and I commend the department for your sacrifices. Overall crime in Torrance is down 13% with significant reductions in assaults, residential, and commercial burglaries, auto theft, and hate crimes and by the end of this year, Torrance Police anticipates the grand opening of its Real-Time Response Center or RTRC. This will leverage the latest video technology and crime analytic software to improve police response to critical incidents while also strengthening investigative efforts. Having a real-time picture of an incident prior to deployment of resources is a force multiplier addressing the situation with increased precision and effectiveness.

TPD also retired 2 K9's and welcomed Tango to represent the department's new Bloodhound Program. Tango is one of ten bloodhounds in all of Los Angeles County. He was officially sworn in earlier this February and already he has been a tremendous asset to the Torrance community.

Opioid Awareness especially among our youth continues to be one of the departments top priorities as narcotics detectives work with TUSD faculty and parents to educate them on awareness and trends among our youth. National Night Out also returned with each District hosting their own block party inviting the community to engage and get to know their neighbors.

I'd also like to commend our Torrance Fire Department for their ongoing efforts to connect with the community as well as their swift emergency response times to all 9-1-1 calls. Led by our new Fire Chief Dave Dumais, they are a shining light within their field. Across the

6 fire stations throughout the City, they continue to remain committed to saving lives and property in Torrance.

In just this last year, Torrance Fire responded to a record number of service calls including 12,433 rescue and emergency medical service incidents and 174 fires. TFD also expanded the Patient Transportation Program to increase the level of service to our community. Torrance Fire now has six ambulances staffed with 35 operators.

TFD is a nationally recognized agency, having the Center for Public Safety Excellence or CPSE Accreditation and Insurance Services Office or ISO Class 1 Rating. Only 1 of 5 departments in the State and only 1 of 113 departments worldwide hold BOTH designations. Did you know, 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. With a focus on efficiency, we utilize state-of-the-art technology to improve services to ensure the appropriate resources are provided during emergencies.

Recently, “Hurricane Hilary” tried to sweep through Southern California, but our City was prepared. Our Office of Emergency Services took action opening the Emergency Operations Center and within a few hours our Public Works, Park Services, Police, Fire and actually ALL of our Departments, came together to tackle a potential disaster. We provided nearly 4,000 pre-filled sandbags for Torrance residents and notified our residents what measures the City was taking during challenging weather conditions. We invited residents to drive up to our City Yard and our Fire Stations to pick up their free pre-filled sandbags. We also shared information on our City’s social media, website and if you subscribe to Torrance Alerts, you received notifications of the City’s efforts to respond to storms and earthquakes. As a matter of fact, residents from neighboring communities drove up to the City Yard asking if they too could have sandbags because this was the only location, they could find offering this FREE service. **THAT IS TORRANCE.** That type of active Risk Management differentiates Torrance, not only from cities in the South Bay, but nationally.

We also launched our Torrance Neighborhood Outdoor Warning Sirens, or TorranceNOW. This is one part of an overall Torrance Community Warning System to notify the community of an emergency, incident or for awareness. TorranceNOW consists of 8 outdoor sirens strategically located at all 6 fire stations, one at the Southeast library and one at the corner of Lomita Boulevard and Madison Street. We held our 2nd siren test

yesterday with the goal of always improving our systems as this audible call-to-action test is just another layer of preparedness within the City.

When our neighboring City of Rolling Hills Estates experienced unimaginable landslides and lost nearly a dozen homes in that community, we asked “How can we assist?” Our Community Service Department immediately offered help to impacted families providing summer daycare support under emergency authorization to assist with childcare needs while dealing with their destroyed homes. Additionally, our police department was asked to assist when there were attempted burglaries of homes in the impacted area. Our police monitored and provided drone support which ultimately led to a successful arrest. As a City, **WE CARE**. Even when the disaster is not in our City, we collectively put our efforts together and help others. When Maui’s fires recently destroyed the town of Lahaina, we had City employees impacted as their family and friends had homes and businesses destroyed. We looked into what viable resources could assist our friends on the island and we went to work to set up information online and provide resources for our community to also help. Whether it’s here in Torrance or beyond, our **Heart** is always in the right place.

Emergency Response also includes our major hospitals and medical facilities located in Torrance. Healthgrades Operating Company, a comprehensive physician rating and comparison database, works with hundreds of hospitals throughout the United States. They recently announced that Torrance Memorial Medical Center along with Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center both received the Patient Safety Excellence Award for the past 3 years consecutively. That is a direct reflection of their quality of care and service to their patients. We also have Kaiser Permanente, Children’s Hospital, City of Hope, UCLA Health and Cedars Sinai affiliations located here in Torrance to serve our growing community needs.

Homelessness is a topic of concern that has ravaged parts of California, Los Angeles County, and many parts of our nation. We continue to battle this crisis head on with the launch of the Homeless Response Team. Thanks to the City Manager’s Office for taking the lead in ensuring people experiencing homelessness in Torrance are helped. They are met with dignity and care... **THAT IS TORRANCE.**

Earlier this year, thanks to our local, county, state, and federal partners, and their generous contributions, we were able to secure Federal Earmarks of nearly \$3.3 Million dollars for Homeless services, that’s enough to extend our 3290 Temporary Housing Village for an additional two years, so that we can continue offering services through 2025. Special thanks to Congressmembers Maxine Waters and Ted Lieu, Senators Diane Feinstein and Alex Padilla, LA County Supervisor Janice Hahn and the LA County CEO

Homeless Initiative Office. They understand our mission and they continue to go to bat for us. We also want to thank Harbor Interfaith Services and Venice Family Clinic, the two local nonprofits that ensure case management, professional operations, and medical support.

Since opening 3290 on July 5, 2022, 26 people have attained permanent housing. And while 3290 currently is full, including a waitlist of people experiencing homelessness just from Torrance, over the course of the last 12 months, the City's Outreach Team helped 8 people get into permanent housing without entering 3290. The City's efforts to prioritize service for those experiencing street homelessness is making an impact. The Los Angeles County Homeless Services Authority or LAHSA recently released data from the 2023 Homeless Count and on a City-wide level, Torrance can share that unsheltered street homelessness has declined by 44 percent since 2022.

By providing housing stability, we are providing a life changing opportunity. 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....all within the laws we must adhere to.

As we move forward, Torrance Unified School District remains the cornerstone of excellent education. I am so pleased to see TUSD students thrive and succeed, year after year. Both my children attended Torrance schools; they are a product of our education system. 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. 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 City of Torrance and the Torrance Unified School District Board have had a long-standing history of collaboratively sharing services and facilities and recently signed a new resolution. This agreement will utilize one another's important public services, and foster joint programming, and increase efficiency in use of facilities and resources. While this is not a new concept, it's a way to reaffirm our collaboration and show our mutual appreciation. It's the various entities like our amazing school district that helps define us as a great City. Thank you to the TUSD Board, Superintendent, along with all of the outstanding teachers, staff, and administrators who continue to put our students first.

The City's Social Services Commission also partnered up with TUSD again this year to coordinate a Back to School Supplies Drive for families in need or experiencing housing instability. Thanks to the generosity of our Torrance community, more than 1,800 NEW items were received including backpacks, notebooks and other essential school supplies. It's the outpour of support from strangers; that is the **HEART of Torrance**.

The Community Services Department continues to support our youth and adults with wonderful park spaces to play along with recreational programs. This year, we've added overnight park security to monitor park closure hours and soon you'll find beautiful art to cover the traffic control utility boxes in the City. Our library launched a "Happy Hour" program to provide outdoor wellness and education programs for the whole community. The department also supported the student delegates from Kashiwa, Japan this summer who were here for 3 weeks. The Kashiwa delegation toured Southern California, dining in our local restaurants and shopping in our local stores and quenching their thirst for American culture, food, and lifestyle. Also, this summer, a new program was launched called Torrance Summer Nights which included a summer season of FREE concerts, Movies in the Park, Comedy, Improv, Art Exhibits, and much more. There was no shortage of talent and entertainment in Torrance.

Another aspect of the City that we take great pride in is the City's beautification and modernization effort. We've updated our City's median signs earlier this year and we continue to install the City's new gateway monuments with more signs to come in the next few weeks. The new wayfinding signage program lets visitors know exactly where they are when they exit the freeway or turn down Torrance Boulevard. That, combined with clean streets, beautiful parks, paved roads, landscaped medians, graffiti free walls, shopping carts put back where they belong... Those are some of the most popular requests we receive on our myTorranceCA mobile app, utilizing simple 21st Century tools. It's because of concerned business owners and citizens in Torrance who share in the common goal of ensuring our City remains beautiful and engaged. **YOU ARE TORRANCE**.

Thanks to our Public Works Department that oversees Street Maintenance, Traffic and Lighting, Engineering, Sanitation, Streetscape, and Water, for keeping our City running smoothly, 24-7. We proudly wrapped up major improvements at Pacific Coast Highway and Hawthorne Boulevard opening up additional left turn lanes, helping to improve the traffic flow of one of the busiest thoroughfares in Torrance. There's also the Residential and Arterial Pavement Improvement Project that began last summer and completed earlier this year. While the congestion and construction may have been inconvenient at the time, now we have widened streets, dual left turn lanes and a dedicated right turn

lane in all four directions providing better traffic flow as well as safer driving conditions for our commuters.

Our Operations Division of the Public Works Department maintains more than 800 lane miles of roadway, more than 500 miles of curbs, gutters, and sidewalks in the City's public right of way. When you drive into work, we want to ensure a smooth ride, no matter how near or far the commute. This past fiscal year, the City filled 7,600 potholes, 116,000 square feet of asphalt street removal and replacement, 153,000 linear feet of paint refreshed City-wide, and slurry sealed about 1.7 Million square feet of asphalt. Our Streetscape Division maintains more than 30 acres of median and parkway turf. 538 trees were planted, and more than 4,000 trees watered. Our Sanitation Division collected more than 8,000 tons of recyclables, nearly 12,000 tons of green waste, and more than 59,000 miles of gutters swept. To say our crews are busy, would be an understatement. How do we do it? Leadership, commitment, and heart. Our executive team is committed to this City as much as I am, as much as you are.

We've also utilized modern cloud technology thanks to the City's Communications Information Technology Department which has implemented a range of innovative measures that will greatly improve the availability and reliability of our IT services. We have introduced collaboration tools to empower City employees to connect and cooperate seamlessly, fostering efficiency and synergy within our workforce. Adapting to our post-COVID landscape, we have implemented technology solutions to support a hybrid workforce where possible, ensuring data security during remote work and resiliency in the event of a future disaster or emergency.

This past year, the Community Development Department also addressed many permitting issues and created the Vendor Task Force to address the concerns of unlicensed sidewalk vendors in Torrance. A Code Enforcement Program, which now covers 7 days a week to ensure public safety with the product being sold. They continue to support more than 100 customers per day at the Permit Center. And over the course of the last calendar year, they processed 8,364 permits. Those permits represent a combined job valuation of just over a \$192 Million dollars. An Outdoor Dining Guideline was developed as a result of the successful Al Fresco dining experience during the pandemic. We also have approval for a new 218 unit apartment complex at the former Gable House and a new 200 unit luxury apartment complex by Legacy Partners coming to Torrance in the future. We are a true destination of residential, commercial, and industrial. Acoya South Bay Senior Living located just South of this hotel will provide

much needed housing for our aging population.... *Amy, we may want to put our name on the waiting list....*

The Commercial Rehabilitation Rebate Program continues to offer 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 can obtain a rebate of up to 50% of the cost of facade improvements. This is just one of the many advantages of doing business in Torrance and staying engaged.

Getting our community members to where they need to go is a top priority. Each year, the Torrance Transit team helps provide millions of trips, to ensure our commuters get to where they need to go. This last year, we served more than 1.8 million riders, offering safe, reliable, and inexpensive transportation to our customers, the people who live, work and do business in the City and the region. We increased our new bus operator hires by 25% from the previous year to ensure we are staffed to serve our community. 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. We hope to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips and improve regional mobility connecting Torrance Transit routes with other regional providers in the new Regional Transit Center.

This summer we got to honor our beloved former Assistant City Manager, Mary K. Giordano, and her legacy as we opened the Torrance Regional Transit Center in her memory. Thanks to the General Services and Public Works Departments and the team who worked tirelessly to complete the construction of the Transit Center in time for the opening in June, just one of the many projects they have their hand in to improve facilities. This collaboration is a true testament of Mary's dedication, hard work, determination, and commitment to the City of Torrance as an employee and resident. The center is located at 465 Crenshaw Boulevard. I encourage you to stop by, take a ride next time you're leaving Torrance and reduce the stress of parking at your next concert or sporting event in Los Angeles. This summer, riders were taken to SoFi stadium to see Taylor Swift, for just \$2 dollars. The \$4 roundtrip ride was seamless, stress-free, clean, and safe. We plan to continue providing more routes to your favorite events throughout the region. Are you ready for some football?

Speaking of fun, if you haven't heard, Torrance is Hiring! As the City reinstated Human Resources as its own Department led by newly appointed director Dr. Hedieh Khajavi, in the last fiscal year, the City hired 344 new employees and promoted 156. As one of the largest employers in Torrance, our HR team has developed and implemented an Employee Wellness Program called "Healthy Torrance: Mind and Body" to target mental and physical wellness while encouraging community engagement and event participation. They've also asked employees to provide ongoing feedback about the various aspects of their job that are essential to workplace engagement and continuous improvement because we believe in the philosophy of investing in our employees. Because they are our front line workers who provide services and programs to each of you and to all of our residents.

The City also partnered with EVOLVE which offers a comprehensive employment preparation and training for young adults with neuro-diversities. Since 2022, the City provided internship opportunities to four young adults with the goal of encouraging community engagement in the workplace. They received hands on experience in the daily operations of the City and we hope more companies will follow suit and provide these kinds of opportunities.

Staying engaged and letting the community See What Torrance is Doing has been our goal. Go ahead and pick up your phone and scan the QR code, and don't forget to take your **I LOVE Torrance**. We want to ensure our residents and business partners have a way to connect with us at the touch of a finger, 24/7. Directly. Whether it's our City's Mobile App, "myTorranceCA," where anyone can request City services, to our City Website, our social media platforms, our Trending in Torrance site, Rumors page to discern false information in the City, to our District Meetings hosted by my colleagues and I throughout all 6 Districts, we want to hear from you. We want to make sure we are connecting with each and every one of you.

The City has also hosted a number of wonderful events this past year that have fully returned in better form than pre-covid including this years Armed Forces Day Parade and Celebration, Fire Service Day, National Night Out, City Yard Open House, the Fourth of July Fireworks Show, the Coastal Cleanup at Torrance Beach happening next weekend, and several more fantastic events planned through the end of 2023. These are opportunities for my colleagues and I along with our City employees from all departments to meet members of the public and show what we do and how we serve our community, our valued stakeholders.

So, what's ahead? Like the seeded paper that you have on the table, once you plant them, you have to be patient and nurture it with plenty of sunshine, water, nutrients and have faith it will bloom into something beautiful, memorable, and even fruitful.

Like these seeds, we've planted a lot of potential and possibilities for the City's growth, expansion, and development. As we nurture existing relationships and grow new ones, we have an exciting future ahead of us and I invite you to join me on this journey. Continue to stay engaged, voice your opinions, and See What Torrance is Doing. With your help and guidance, I know that we can continue to be trailblazers in our path to building relationships, partnerships, collaborations, and economic development in our great City.

WE ARE TORRANCE. Each of you provide the "WhyTorrance" experience. We have history, character, great businesses, inspired leadership, committed families, excellent public safety and schools, top notch hospitals, great neighborhoods, and open spaces and there are many great opportunities still ahead of us.

I want to leave you with this...

Whether you're new to Torrance, or you have deep roots here in the City... TOGETHER, let's continue to make Torrance the **HEART of the SOUTH BAY.**

Thank you.