100 YEARS OF COMMUNITY – STATE OF THE CITY 2024
MAYOR WILLIAM MAN

2023 marked the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Temple Townsite Company. It offered us a unique opportunity to reflect on how our community has grown and changed over the last century. Tonight's State of the City will focus on the accomplishments of the past year, which was the collective effort of the many members of our City team. First, I'd like to recognize the leadership of our city council: Mayor Pro Tem Tom Chavez, Councilmember Cynthia Sternquist, Councilmember Fernando Vizcarra, and Councilmember Vincent Yu. I am proud to serve with my esteemed councilmembers; each of us brings a different skill set, diverse cultural perspectives, and unique life experiences that represent the beautifully complex social fabric of our city today. I want to thank our commissioners from the Planning Commission, Transportation and Public Safety Commission, and the Parks and Recreation Commission. They dedicate so much of their time and energy to vital functions of the city and essentially serve as an extension of the city council and we are deeply grateful for their service. I also want to recognize our City Manager Bryan Cook for his leadership and management of the City team, our City Attorney Greg Murphy for ensuring our actions are lawful and just, and our

Department Heads and city staff that do the hard work to ensure that council policy is met with action and results. All of the achievements we highlight tonight could not have been done without your steadfast dedication to public service.

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

Celebrating 100 years as a township does not happen often, in fact it only happens once, so we knew we had to do something special. We also knew that it would take a group effort to make it great. The Historical Society kicked it off with a Centennial Banquet in May, followed by extensive outreach and activities throughout our Summer Concerts in the Park. Working with the Temple City Unified School District and the Historical Society, we hosted our Centennial Celebration on Saturday, September 30th. The Centennial Parade featured all of our schools, student performances, and many local organizations, and the true spirit of Temple City was on full display. It even featured our 2023 Camellia Festival Royal Court, who did not get a chance to be in a parade because of the rain last February. During our Centennial Parade, it was their time to shine. The celebrations included the Classic Car Show that featured an array of timeless vintage cars; the Fall Festival showcased the incredible

performing arts from our students and youth, featuring cheer, choreo, and our world-famous Brighter Side Singers. We even had Paul Spitzzeri from the Workman and Temple Homestead Museum give a series of insightful and educational talks to spotlight the history of our city during its founding years. Children enjoyed a variety of games and activities at the kids zone, a jumbo slide, rock climbing, and train rides on Las Tunas. We even created a special Centennial edition of our Connect Magazine to commemorate and highlight the history of our town. We have a come a long way since the town of Temple celebrated its 1-year anniversary in September of 1924 with a rodeo, a barbeque, and performances by the Pacific Electric Band. However, the spirit of celebration has endured and prospered even 100 years later.

PARKS PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS

Our Centennial Celebration was certainly one of our highlights of the year. This success was built upon a solid foundation of Parks and Recreation programming excellence throughout the years. Although the pandemic caused temporary disruption, this year represented a full-fledged recovery of programs that were on hiatus. Our popular Senior Lunch Program, which adopted a meals-on-wheels delivery approach during

COVID, returned fully to in-person meals and served on average about 90 seniors daily. We partnered with the El Monte School District to offer Stars Club afterschool care at Cleminson Elementary, fully subsidizing the cost for all participants. We even partnered with the Los Angeles County Assessor's Office to host a Homeowners Resource Fair at Live Oak Park to help our residents get the latest information on recent laws and their impacts to homeowners.

Our tradition of hosting great special events continued with a strong line-up that included the Easter Egg Hunt and Pancake Breakfast, Temple City's Got Talent, the perennially popular Summer Concerts in the Park, Movies in the Park, and Camp-A-Palooza. In the fall, the Hi-Autumn Festival returned in full force with another successful collaboration with our incredible partners at World Journal, featuring a wide variety of food and festivities, and highlighting the importance of gathering together as family and friends. Our Halloween Carnival was as popular as ever with children and adults alike having fun at the Trunk or Treat, with an array of creative and colorful costumes on full display throughout Live Oak Park. We honored the service and sacrifice of our local vets with our Veterans Day ceremony, which has become one of our most important traditions through

the year. We finished 2023 off strong with our annual tree lighting ceremony and parade, Lights on Temple City.

Earlier in February, we ushered in the Year of the Dragon through a fun and festive Lunar New Year celebration. We gathered to witness incredible performances by dragon dancers and lion dancers, where children were able to get up close and share a moment with their favorite lion. The day was also filled with delicious food from local restaurants and memorable performances from local groups, organizations, and businesses. This year we hosted the largest number of community and activity booths that we have ever seen, in no small part because of the collaboration with the Temple City Chinese American Association and our amazing Parks and Recreation staff. We thank them for contributing greatly to this success.

PUBLIC SAFETY

At many of our events, you may have seen or even met some of the men and women who are charged with keeping our city safe. You may have even been at the National Night Out in August where everyone had a chance to meet and interact with our deputies from Temple Station. Under

the new leadership of Captain Meza, our partners at Temple Station have continued their excellence in serving and protecting our community. There was a renewed effort at engaging our residents and businesses throughout the year. We had a strong community showing at a Coffee with the Captain hosted at a local favorite Cloverleaf Bakery. We continued to have many residents engaged at our monthly neighborhood watch meetings. We also partnered with LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger to host an educational forum on cybercrimes and fraud prevention, an important issue that unjustly targets our seniors. As a city, we put our money where our mouth is. We budgeted over $75,000 dollars for overtime to conduct saturated patrols during peak holiday seasons and to conduct targeted special operations, and we installed 10 FLOCK cameras at key intersections to provide additional tools for our deputies to identify and catch criminals who want to disrupt our quality of life. These are some of the reasons why I am proud to report that Part I Crimes are down nearly 20% compared to the previous year.

One of the most important reasons for our recent success is because of our Temple City Special Assignment Team, consisting of Deputies Van Lam, Francis Bui, and Randell Anchondo. Their hard work was recognized by

the Temple City Woman's Club who awarded them the Humanitarian Award during their annual Christmas Banquet. In a time when law enforcement is seeing great challenges from external forces, this award reminded us that Temple City will always stand together with the men and women of Temple Station. We will work together to keep our city a safe place for our families and friends. We thank them for their incredible dedication and service.

BUSINESS DISTRICT

Our steadfast commitment to public safety is one of many reasons new businesses choose to invest in Temple City. We continue to be known as a destination for popular restaurants and dining experiences. Camellia Square, endearingly known to us as the Teapot Plaza, saw the grand opening of many new businesses. Ba-fang Dumpling brought a taste of Taiwan with a delicious assortment of dumplings and noodles. Mikiya Wagyu Shabu House introduced a premium dining experience with its Japanese wagyu hotpot. Jia Fu Tea rounded out this list by providing an immersive tea-tasting experience that was deeply rooted in the ancient history of the art of brewing Chinese tea. Amidst the enduring

renewal of our small businesses and restaurants that emerged from the pandemic, the Temple City Chamber of Commerce undertook a revival of its own. Beginning in March of 2023, the Chamber Board of Directors installed new leadership at the helm and began an incredible overhaul of the Chamber's mission and vision, and brought back many of the events and mixers that were the cornerstone of our small business community. Since then, they have held legislative lunch sessions with important leaders such as Congressmember Judy Chu, Assemblymember Mike Fong, LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger, LA County Assessor Jeff Prang, and yours truly, the Mayor of Temple City. They have also hosted monthly mixers and networking events to bring our business community together. They will also be hosting a State of Public Safety with Sheriff Luna this Friday March 1st. It was a great pleasure to work with the board through this transformative year and we wish them great success in the coming years.

CROSSROADS SPECIFIC PLAN DEVELOPMENTS

When Walter Temple founded the Temple Townsite Company in 1923, the business district was centered around Sunset Avenue and Main Street, which we now call Temple City Blvd and Las Tunas Drive. Temple City

Park was created as the focal point for community gatherings and events, and the Pacific Electric Red Car station was right next door, where city hall is now located. The town of Temple was planned for a family-oriented community that would be an attractive place for people to live. 100 years later, our city continues to plan for and lay down the foundation for change. In 2017, we adopted a significant change to our zoning laws and created the Crossroads Specific Plan. These changes introduced the concept of mixed-used zoning that allowed for commercial businesses at the ground floor and residential units above. In December, the Begonia Apartments at 5570 Rosemead Blvd. became the first mixed-use development to be built in Temple City, featuring 75 residential units over 11,000 square feet of commercial space at the ground level. Construction of a second mixed-use development has begun at 9465 Las Tunas Drive, next to Cloverleaf Bakery. As a city, we may not be able to mandate when private development should occur; in fact, we are occasionally reminded that there are external forces that seek to mandate changes in how we build in our residential neighborhoods. Regardless of these circumstances, we as a council remain steadfast in crafting a policy framework that creates synergy with the marketplace to spur redevelopment in a manner that is consistent with the character of our community.

While we endured the pressures brought on by inflation and the rising cost of goods and services, our businesses and residents have responded positively by continuing to invest in the city. The façade improvements at the old K-Mart site have been completed and are now home to a brand new Chuze Fitness and GW Supermarket, which will open later this year. Its exterior is adorned by a beautiful mural that pays homage to our beloved city with our Temple City Park Pavilion, the camellia, and the parrots. It also boasts 40 electric vehicle charging stations, making it the largest EV charging station in the entire San Gabriel Valley. This is a testament to the positive response from the private sector to issues of great importance to present and future generations: environmental sustainability and climate change.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY & AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

Although the Town of Temple was founded in the midst of the economic boom of the Roaring Twenties, it was abruptly ended by the great stock market crash in 1929, which led to the onset of the Great Depression. Although we did not go through a similar economic fallout recently, we were not far removed from a worldwide pandemic that created economic

uncertainty. In fact, many cities are still reeling from the economic impacts brought on by the pandemic and inflation, but we, as a council, had consistently approached the city's budget and spending with the principle of fiscal responsibility. As the fiscal year closed on June 30, 2023, we achieved a $2.6 million surplus in the General Fund. One of the silver linings of the pandemic was the infusion of money from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which granted us a windfall that we otherwise would never have received. These factors together created the catalyst for one of the largest capital projects investments we have budgeted in many decades.

LAS TUNAS AND STREET IMPROVEMENTS

We have long regarded Las Tunas Drive to be the main commercial corridor through the city. The ARPA allowed us to embark on one of the most exciting projects we have undertaken in many years. A few months ago, Council approved a budget of over $3 million to enhance and beautify the streetscape along Las Tunas from city limit to city limit. Lamp posts, benches, and trash receptacles will be enhanced and given a fresh new look. New pots and planters will breathe new life into our historic downtown business district and the introduction of seasonal banners and

decorative signage will modernize the look of our streetscape. Utility boxes will be adorned with beautiful art that will draw inspiration from our local students and artists.

We're also introducing several exciting new programs and subsidies that our businesses can take advantage of. We'll be launching a pilot program where businesses can install new awnings and blade signs to beautify their storefronts. Restaurants can apply for streetside café furniture that will be fully subsidized by the city. Our hope is that all of these elements will bring a stronger identity to our downtown business district and build upon the successes of existing businesses that make Temple City a destination people want to go to for special and unique dining and shopping experiences. We encourage businesses to visit the city's website later this summer to get more information on how to apply for these grants and subsidies.

Our investment in Las Tunas is a reminder that great communities are supported by healthy infrastructure. One of the most important, but often forgotten, pieces of infrastructure is our roads. Although great challenges remain in the funds we receive from the State to maintain our aging roads,

we have invested a steady amount of money into repaving our streets in a manner that optimizes the limited funding we have. We continue that effort this year by budgeting $7 million in rehabilitating some of the worst streets in the city. This investment will improve over 1.5 million square feet of roadway. Since 2014, we have improved over 8.6 million square feet of roads, which represented 62% of our entire city's road network. It has been a long road to where we are now and we will continue to work on investing in our road infrastructure.

PUBLIC ART AT PRIMROSE PARK AND ROSEMEAD BLVD

Another element that adds a strong sense of community to our infrastructure is art. As a city, our investment into public art began over 10 years ago. Many of these art pieces can be found along Rosemead Blvd and we added five original art pieces to the directories that decorate this bustling commercial corridor. This would not be possible without the artistic brilliance of local resident and artist Ashley Keelin. In addition, we added an amazing art piece at Primrose Park created by tile muralist Mike Tauber. This art piece paid tribute to many elements that are unique to Temple City, like our parrots and camellia flowers. It's rounded out with a majestic backdrop of the San Gabriel Mountains and the citrus groves that

were a big part of the early history of the San Gabriel Valley. In addition, we are actively looking for a permanent home for our beloved mural of Temple City on Parade, that once adorned the side of the library.

LIVE OAK PARK & TEMPLE CITY PARK

By far, the most ambitious and exciting investment we made this year was council's approval of new playground structures and equipment at Temple City Park and Live Oak Park. Following our success at building Primrose Park (which, by the way, was recognized by the LA Times as 1 of 14 fantastic playgrounds in Southern California), we knew we could do something grand. In collaboration with SWA Architects, we reimagined this space and pushed the boundaries of design and architectural ingenuity to create transformational change. Temple City Park will feature a bamboo forest theme with new swing sets and a climbing structure. The picnic shelters will be refreshed to match this theme and this will offer a much-needed enhancement to a part of Temple City Park that sees heavy use during many of our community events.

With our Centennial Celebration in mind, Live Oak Park offered a chance for us to reflect on pieces of our past that were memorable and

unique. Many of us remember the iconic Moon Rocket that was installed in 1962. The new plan at Live Oak Park centers around the theme of bringing generations together. A new rocket ship and space station will be the centerpiece of a Space-themed playground featuring a wide variety of slides, swings, spinners, and interactive equipment. The eye-popping design and color scheme will be one-of-a-kind in the entire San Gabriel Valley. Why did we choose to invest heavily in our parks? Because, simply put, our residents deserve the very best, and we know that great parks make our city a great place to live. We hope that this space will serve as a celebration of the fond memories of Temple City's past and an inspiration for future generations to create new memories of their own.

TCUSD COLLABORATION

Our parks also represent an investment in our children. One of our most important partners in this mission is the Temple City Unified School District. Years ago, when we were conducting community outreach for strategic planning, we asked residents what were the issues that were most important to them. By a wide margin, the number one issue at that time was increased collaboration between the city and the district. It gives me great pleasure to report that the collaboration between us is at an all-time

high. I am proud to serve on the council committee with Mayor Pro Tem Chavez, and we meet regularly with our partners at the Board of Education. I want to thank board members Donna Georgino, Matt Smith, and Mary Sneed, who served on the standing committee with us. By working together, we have brought back a joint-use agreement for the shared use of district and city facilities. Many programs that support our families and benefit our youth will flourish under this collaboration, such as the popular STARS program. This accomplishment highlights the mutual understanding that we serve the same community, and when we work together, everyone benefits. We look forward to many more years of building trust and finding ways to grow together.

CAMELLIA FESTIVAL

Nothing emphasizes the importance of investing in our youth more than the Camellia Festival. As we celebrated the 80th year of the Camellia Festival this past weekend, I marveled at the commitment and dedication of so many volunteers who are able to bring new energy to this event year after year. The grand marshal and honorary grand marshals honored this year was a testament to many years, decades, of dedication and service to an enduring Temple City tradition. Each parade participant

I also found it remarkable that this event can inspire people near and far, some as far as 3000 miles away. Our sister city delegation from Hualien County, Taiwan, traveled this great distance so their students can be a part of our timeless tradition. They also had a chance to meet our students at Temple City High School and get a glimpse of what life is like in America. Upon seeing the festival with her own eyes, Hualien County Magistrate Hsu Chen-wei was deeply inspired and remarked that Temple City and Hualien shared a common bond: we both understood the paramount importance of uplifting our families, our youth, our community, and ensuring that the traditions that make us who we are, can continue for generations to come.

CLOSING REMARKS

Tonight, it was a privilege and honor for me to share our accomplishments, and to get a glimpse of many exciting projects in the coming year. 100 years later, the enduring theme and reason for why we do what we do, has not changed. The time and energy we dedicate to building up our community is to ensure that future generations can inherit and preserve the very values that we hold dear here in Temple City. Standing with me tonight, are 10 exceptional and talented young men and women who

represent the very best of us. In the last year, the Youth Committee have dedicated themselves to learning about how local governments work and function, as well as learning about the many facets of public safety awareness. Our city's centennial year offered a unique opportunity to impart a valuable lesson: that the key to building a successful future lies in understanding and cherishing our history. We acknowledge that the Temple City from even just 30 years ago was different than it is today. Here is Live Oak Park from 1966; it looks different now and in another year, it's going to look very different again. Together, we have a shared responsibility to be role models for future generations, to demonstrate the principles of civic duty and public service. Together, we can transform Temple City and build an even better community for future generations to come. Thank you, and good night.