2020 STATE OF THE CITY
"The Not So Secret of Our Success"

Presented by Mayor Nanette Fish

INTRODUCTION

Good evening and thank you for joining us at tonight's 2020 State of the City. On behalf of my city council colleagues, it is my privilege as your mayor to welcome you to this annual event.

As I reflected on this past year, I asked myself, "What is the secret to our success?" Well, the secret is not so secret. Our success is built on three key and enduring values: **engagement, stability and respect.** It is these foundational values that have made Temple City a community where everyone feels welcomed, cared for, and a place everyone can call home. These values embody our civic organizations, **city government, schools,** businesses, and families.

Tonight, I'd like to show you how our community not only lives by but acts upon those values.

ENGAGEMENT

A hallmark of Temple City's success is how the community collaboratively works together. Active and ongoing civic engagement has created an environment with a sense of openness to all. Following are a few examples where this engagement has produced real dividends to improve local quality of life.

We partner with public safety

Our collaboration with **Temple Sheriff's Station** is an excellent example of how trying new types of engagement, while maintaining tried and true methods, can lead to a safer community.

In January, we held our first-ever **Burgers and the Brass** event where residents—after work—had an opportunity to casually meet with local law enforcement over burgers. (What could be better?) As community members usually engage with law enforcement during emergencies or emotional situations, those interactions are not always the most effective means to build relationships.

The Burgers and the Brass event allowed residents to meet with Capt. David Flores and deputies of Temple Sheriff's Station to express concerns and ask questions about their neighborhood in a relaxed atmosphere with no agenda or a guest speaker. I hope that participants now have an even stronger connection to the deputies that serve their neighborhood and will feel more at ease when problems do arise.

Our Neighborhood Watch Program continues to provide a foundation to our community- based policing approach. Now in its ninth year, the program educates residents on why crime happens, how to improve personal safety, and when to contact law enforcement. I encourage you to participate.

Our Monthly Law Enforcement Meetings with Temple Sheriff's Station also provide direct lines of communication and accountability regarding local crime and public safety trends. For those unable to attend these monthly meetings, which are held the last Wednesday of the month at 7 a.m. in our community room, a copy of the most recent presentation can be downloaded from the city website at templecity.us.

Because of the community's partnership with local law enforcement, **I'm proud to report that Part 1 crimes** (serious crimes) are down over 20% from last year and are at a historic five-year low! Additionally, Temple City once again ranked in

the top **10 percent of all cities in California** when it comes to public safety. These achievements are the result of you—countless individuals taking it upon yourself to make Temple City an even safer community.

We civically engage

Our engagement took an artistic turn this year with our first-ever **Photo Contest,** (as you see all around you. The contest asked residents to take their best shot at **capturing** the city's spirit. As a result, more than 150 photos were submitted by 49 local **photographers,** who captured the diversity of Temple City's people, landscapes, and **events.** While we were pleasantly overwhelmed by the response, it did show us one thing we thought we already knew: **Temple Citians** really care and love their community.

Social media is changing our world. The city's social media accounts continue to be a critical driver of community engagement. For all the ills and concerns about social

media, this critical communications tool has allowed city hall to reach residents that we may not otherwise connect with. In 2019, for example, our informational posts across four social media platforms reached, at minimum, over **7,441 users**. Furthermore, our engagement rate increased by 30%, demonstrating that not only are we producing interesting and noteworthy content, we are successfully driving engagement.

When it comes to one of our long-standing tools of communicating, our beloved **CONNECT Magazine** needed a complete rebrand. Today, the new magazine continues to provide the community with in-depth articles about the people and events that shape Temple City which the local media can no longer offer.

We advocate for the community

Two major issues facing California and its cities are housing and cannabis, which were placed right on our front doorstep this past year. As sensitive yet important issues, the city council listened to resident concerns and responded with the community's best interests in mind.

For example, concerns about proposed cannabis operations in a nearby jurisdiction and its impacts to Temple City neighborhoods lead us to pursue legal action to protect our residents. When the state looked to **drastically upzone** our single-family home neighborhoods, the city council told the state legislature that imposing new mandates on Temple City was not only wrong but also misguided. Moving ahead, the city will collaborate to address the statewide housing crisis, but under one condition: that land use control stays local and that

the state legislature not simply override and disregard the will of local communities.

Our advocacy is not only about reacting to concerns; it is also about actively participating on behalf of the community's best interests. Our role in local and regional organizations, like the **San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments** and the California Contract Cities Association—to name a few—ensures that Temple City's voice is heard on critically important regional issues, from transportation and homelessness to risk management and local governance. Thank you to Councilmember Sternquist for her work on the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, Mayor Pro Tempore Tom Chavez for his work on the California Joint Powers Insurance Authority and thank you to all my colleagues for appointing me to the California Contract Cities Association.

We actively plan for the community

This past summer, we worked with the community to shape the design, look and feel of **Primrose Park**, the first park to be built in Temple City in over 60 years. What made this process most unique is that residents did not just idly sit back and let us tell them what they wanted. Instead, they helped design the park.

Working with a well-respected firm, design experts and community members came together to create a beautiful yet practical amenity for our **downtown area**. The process was done in a respectfully and approachable manner that allowed for authentic community input. Soon we will hear from the state on whether we receive grant funding for the project. But this I know: The City Council is committed to constructing a new park by 2022.

Our stakeholders work for the community

A community where stakeholders do not work together is one that is neither thriving nor engaged.

To illustrate this point, I am happy to report that the City and **Temple City Unified School District** have regularly been meeting to keep lines of communication open. Over the next year, both agencies will **work together** to address pedestrian improvements and emergency preparedness at school campuses. As the school district's constituents are the same as the city's (and vice-versa), **collaboration** only makes both institutions stronger and more responsive to the community.

Recently, you've seen some changes to our civic center. Late last year, the **Temple City Chamber of Commerce** relocated its headquarters to this building (council chambers) for greater visibility and improved accessibility. And earlier this week, **LA County Library** broke ground on the much-anticipated Temple City Library Renovation and Expansion Project. The

community can soon expect a completely renovated library with a family reading area, children's library, added meeting space, and expanded collections. A grand opening is set for next summer.

While these were just a few examples, engagement with local stakeholders gives us (the city council) a sense that we're addressing community needs—all while setting a foundation for the value of stability.

STABILITY (One of our unsung but greatest strengths)

When I think about stability, it's not the most exciting idea. It doesn't necessarily make you want to jump out of your chair and yell, "Hooray, stability!" But in the case of local government, financial stability is a fundamental component that allows a city to prosper.

Each year, independent auditors examine our books to let the city council know of any concerns regarding the city's financial operations. Tonight, I am proud to inform you that our recent audit passed with flying colors—like those of years past.

We recently received additional confirmation of our strong financial stability. **In October, the state auditor** issued a report on the financial stability of all California cities. Temple City ranked in the top 10 percent of financially sound cities.

This achievement is not by accident. It is based on sound financial decisions and planning by the city council. But the economic road ahead will not be easy, especially as core service and employee costs continue to rise. The city council will continue to make prudent and careful financial decisions to ensure a sustainable future.

I mentioned the California Joint Power Insurance Authority before. What I didn't mention: 2019 saw the least number of

claims filed and the amount of city funds paid to settle those claims. While other cities were fighting with insurance, we took a proactive approach to implement practices that minimize risk and liability.

Our financial stability continues to ground us and create a solid foundation for the city to grow. But stability is usually complemented with a key value that has made Temple City so successful: Respect.

RESPECT (Civility is key to a prosperous community)

In the five years I've served on the city council, the value of respect has helped make Temple City so unique. It's this respect that permeates amongst the city council and its decision-making process.

As a city each of us brings their own unique life and work experience to serve the community. And as five independent-

minded individuals, we sometimes have disagreements (surprise, surprise). But we take our responsibility seriously, ensuring that we act with respect, dignity, and in search of common ground. When we cannot reach consensus, we respect each other's opinions and decisions.

Why is this important to city operations? Look at those communities where petty bickering, bad intentions, and character attacks lead to discord and distrust, which is ultimately ineffective in serving the community. The achievements that I spoke of earlier—our record-low crime rate, high civic engagement, and sound finances—is a reflection of the respect and civility the city council shows in making important policy decisions that impact Temple City. And we will continue to do so, recognizing and listening to resident concerns, and governing with the value of respect always in mind.

CLOSING

I hope you can see that the secret to our success is not so secret. The values that embody the **Temple City community**—engagement, stability, and respect—play out daily in our classrooms, at our **parks,** with our neighbors, and during city council meetings. It is these values that sustain us, that fill us with hope for the future, and that makes Temple City an amazing place to live.

Again, it has been my honor to serve as your mayor over this past year. A big and heartfelt thanks go to the community for allowing me to represent you. Thanks also go to a wonderful group of colleagues: Mayor Pro Tempore Tom Chavez, Councilmember William Man, Councilmember Cynthia Sternquist, and Councilmember Vincent Yu. And lastly, thank you to my family and friends for being here and being a part of the great Temple City community.

Good night.