STATE OF THE CITY

“THE LITTLE CITY THAT COULD”

INTRODUCTION

Good evening, I am Vincent Yu, Mayor of Temple City, a wonderful place that we all love to call home. Thank you for joining me this evening to discuss the 2022 State of City.

I want to start by acknowledging and thanking my fellow City Council colleagues, who have provided me with support and exemplified great leadership throughout this year: Mayor Pro Tem Cynthia Sternquist, Councilmember Tom Chavez, Councilmember William Man, and Councilmember Fernando Vizcarra. I would also like to acknowledge our Commissioners, City volunteers, City Manager, City Attorney, City staff, the County Sheriff and Fire Departments, and so many community partners for their contributions to the City’s accomplishments and success. While I currently serve as Mayor, I am here representing my City Council colleagues and staff to report to you our residents and businesses the accomplishments of this past year, I thank my Council colleagues and staff for allowing me to represent all of them in this virtual format.

I have to say the circumstances in which I am addressing the residents and businesses of Temple City tonight are not exactly ideal. Just like our remotely held council meetings for the last 18 months, I don’t have a live audience in the Council Chamber with me, and I wish I could see you face to face. Nevertheless, I am happy to have you here with us as you tune in from the safety and the comfort of your own home.

If 2020 was a year of disruption and uncertainty, 2021 was a year of adaptation and innovation in Temple City. As we conclude the second year of the pandemic, I am glad to report that we have met the challenges of serving the community head-on with lessons learned from 2020. Like a well-oiled engine of a train chugging along the tracks, I think of Temple City as “the little city that could.” I couldn’t be prouder of how our city not only managed to stay on track with maintaining services to the residents but successfully navigated the obstacles and opportunities that came our way.

Tonight, I would like to focus on “the little city that could.” Imagine the city as a train engine and its different train cars. The topics we will discuss tonight – community well-being, public health and safety, city planning and housing, economic development, financial health, and infrastructure—are all critical components that allow this Temple City Train to keep moving forward providing essential services to our residents.

COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

City Celebrations

As we enter each phase of this pandemic, I am assured by the fact that our city continues to stay on course by following our public health authorities’ recommendations. Temple City’s vaccination rates are, as of this address, at 81%. I cannot stress enough the importance of keeping our families and our communities safe by getting vaccinated and boosted so that we may continue to enjoy the beloved city traditions and events in person.

One of the highlights of 2021, in Temple City, was the return to some in-person events. There is no better way to feel the spirit and see the fabric of our community than to gather at city events. Our Parks and Recreation Department went above and beyond in its commitment to bringing back the traditions that we so missed. It goes without saying that the return of our Concerts in the Park series brought great joy to the community. And so, from July to September of 2021, we welcomed seven performers to our Performing Arts Pavilion and hundreds of attendees to safely enjoy music and dance during the warm summer nights. It was wonderful to see lawn chairs covering Temple City Park. If it is safe to do so, we look forward to the day we can attend these concerts again.

In 2021, not only did we get to enjoy Concerts in the Park in person, but we also got to enjoy Movies in the Park for a whole month. We also saw the return of the Fall Festival and Classic Car show. We got to salute and honor our Temple City veterans at the Veterans Day Celebration. And we topped the year off with the festive and magical Lights on Temple City event. The City Council and I hold these events near and dear to our hearts as they are now precious memories that are truly the silver lining of these uncertain times. Let us hold out hope still that we may continue holding these events in 2022, Nevertheless, the City will continue to be vigilant and nimble with our City policies and operations in serving the public while at the same time maintaining safety as our highest priority for both staff and patrons at these events.

Continuity of Services

In addition to continuing to provide our usual quality of service to residents, additional services that were born out of the pandemic also continued in 2021. Last year, the City delivered 36,000 meals directly to the homes of seniors. I would like to acknowledge our Park and Recreation staff for providing this essential service to our seniors throughout the pandemic. In addition, our Dial-A-Ride shuttle service remains a valuable resource for our senior citizens to get around. Last year, over 4,500 rides were given to seniors who needed to go to doctors' appointments, get their grocery shopping done, and even to hair appointments. Our Parks and Recreation department also continued to host our popular monthly Family Trivia Nights over Zoom. To make sure we were keeping everyone safe while still hosting our more popular events, we conducted hybrid drive-through events for Halloween and Easter. The popularity and interest in programs that serve the community-at-large show why Temple City is not only a safe community but a community that provides services where all can participate and enjoy.

In addition to in-person service at City Hall, each of the City departments also continued to build out online services to allow more accessibility to our residents and customers. The Parks and Recreation Department started electronic newsletter blasts to keep people informed and updated on recreation programming that was impacted by the virus. Our Public Safety team continued to successfully host virtual neighborhood watch meetings to keep our community informed and vigilant against crime. I also must mention another virtual event born out of the pandemic that has brought so much joy to the children of Temple City. We held our second Zoom with Santa event this year. Over

65 children, ages 2-12, got the chance to chat with Santa and share their hopes and wishes. This event is another wonderful example of using innovative ways to keep the Season's magic alive with the assistance of technology.

As we rely more and more on utilizing online tools to serve our citizens and visitors, I am excited to share that Temple City has started the redesign process for the City's website. Much of the public's first interaction with our city is via the internet, and their first impression of Temple City is really what they have gleaned from visiting our website at templecity.us. During the pandemic, we saw much higher traffic on our website as people booked City Hall appointments, submitted building and planning forms, requested services, and checked the City's coronavirus situation summaries. Our new website will be optimized for mobile use, more accessible and in compliance with the American Disabilities Act, more accessible to our diverse community, easier to navigate, which will provide a much better experience to our visitors to the virtual City Hall.

Improving our City's technological infrastructure is an important investment for the City, as we learned to adapt quickly to changes in our operations due to the pandemic. More than ever, we are relying on technology to better serve our residents and customers. As a City, we are always looking for ways to improve and optimize our workflow for more efficiency.

Small Business and Temporary Rent Relief Grants

Last year, we also completed our Small Business and Temporary Rent relief grant programs. I am proud to say that the City was able to provide $211,000 worth of rent relief to 71 low-income households affected by COVID-19. In addition, the City issued $372,000 worth of grants to 50 small businesses in the city. This is equivalent to 58 low-income jobs or 42 full-time positions. Here is Josh Ramirez, co-owner of Temple City Barbershop, on how this grant had helped his business.

-play video clip-

I would like to thank Josh for being such an active and integral member of our community, and for providing us with his first-hand experience with the City's relief grant program. I am so happy to hear this grant was of some help to Temple City Barbershop.

Planning and Housing

Our Community Development Department worked tirelessly last year to update the City's Housing Element. The Housing Element is essential because it creates programs and policies that preserve, improve, and develop housing in the City. The Housing Element which is required by the State of California can determine the shape, the pattern, and the density of housing development within a community. City Staff and the Planning Commission have taken a thoughtful and careful approach in developing the housing element that reflects the community input given over the last several years balancing the needs of housing demand while at the same time maintaining the characteristics that make Temple City a desirable community for all.

Last April, the City joined the San Gabriel Valley Regional Housing Trust as an Affiliate member, to support its mission to increase the supply of affordable housing in the overall region. This is an important step in the right direction for us. The Regional Housing Trust was formed two years ago and has since applied for state funding for hundreds of affordable housing units in surrounding cities. $20 million had been earmarked in the State budget to go to the San Gabriel Valley Regional Housing Trust to help with construction and completion of affordable housing development across the San Gabriel Valley.

Temple City also received Permanent Local Housing Allocation funding from the State to give a much-needed boost to our popular Home Renovation Grant and loan programs. Last October, the City Council approved almost $200,000 worth of funding to be allocated for accessibility improvements to lower-income homeowners in Temple City. This means the City will provide grants of up to $25,000 for lower-income homeowners to fix up their restrooms or build ramps or handrails to make their homes more accessible and livable, so that our residents may age in place and stay in the homes they have lived in for decades.

SB 9

One of the challenges we faced as a City was to implement new state laws that were beyond the City's control but still must be followed. California State legislature has been working to increase the state's affordable housing supply. Senate Bill 9 was recently signed into law, which will require cities and counties to approve applications to

subdivide each single-family lot into two lots and to allow the construction of two units on each new lot. In other words, an R-1 zoned, single-family lot could potentially have four residential units. The City Council, in considering how these changes could affect the city, moved swiftly to pass an Ordinance in December to further address issues not included in the new State measure to mitigate some unintended consequences of this new law. The City's action address impacts not fully thought through in SB 9 by ensuring the affordability of new urban dwellings; meeting regional housing needs allocation goals; addressing environmental impacts including reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, and traffic; and most importantly addressing neighborhood compatibility. These vital components of the Ordinance go further than the State to make sure housing remains affordable by requiring the new urban dwellings be provided at low- and very-low-income rates. It is important to the City Council that the City complies with the State's new objective of increasing affordable housing yet balancing the State's mandate with local measures most optimal and suitable for our city.

Many Temple Citians and visitors to the city may be curious about future developments around town. The ground has been broken and construction is beginning on a 73-unit, mixed-use development at 5570 Rosemead Blvd, which begins to fulfill the goals of the Crossroads Specific Plans that the City and the community worked so hard on for many years. And finally, plans are underway for a new grocery store tenant at the former K-Mart site. These exciting developments will no doubt add to the vibrancy of Temple City's commercial zones. While we are thrilled that more revenue and development are

coming our way, we continue to be cautiously optimistic and watch out for the possibility of things taking a turn for the worse in this unprecedented time. I can proudly say that Temple City has weathered 2021 in a fiscally responsible way.

Our local economy shows signs of rebounding from the last year of the pandemic with the total building permit total valuation totaling $44 million in 2021, compared to $17 million in 2020, and sales tax revenue back to nearly pre-pandemic levels. We are grateful to the business owners, contractors and residents, for not only investing in Temple City but continuing to reinvest in Temple City during the pandemic.

Financial Health

Temple City continues to remain financially stable and strong amidst the pandemic. We have a balanced operating budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22. In addition, not only did the City receive a clean audit for Fiscal Year ending June 2020, for over 10 years in a row the City was awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association. In another sign of our strong fiscal health, last year, the State Auditor updated the annual Fiscal Health of Cities report which ranked Temple City in the top 15% of most fiscally sound cities in California and deemed us as a financially low-risk city, ranking at 351 out of 423 cities (with 423 being the healthiest).

There was great concern that during the beginning of the pandemic with the economy shut down the City may have to substantially use its rainy-day fund to continue essential City services at the same level.

I am happy to report to the community that not only has the City maintained services, but we were also able to maintain and slightly increase our General Fund reserves (our rainy-day fund), to $20 million, or a year of the city's operating costs, which is available to help fill the gaps in funding for essential services and future investments in the community. Our fiscal strength has been a cornerstone of our city during the pandemic and will continue to be in the future. The City Council truly believes that keeping the City financially strong is an obligation for current and future generations.

ARPA Funding

The City also received a one-time allocation of $8 million in federal funding through the American Rescue Plan Act. We are working on a plan how we can prudently invest this money to improve Temple Citians' quality of life. In the coming months, the City Council will discuss the use of these one-time funds and how to invest them responsibly in the community.

Public Safety and Health

Our collaboration with Temple Sheriff's Station is an excellent example of how the City continues to serve the community despite the changes going on. I'd like to thank our

Temple Station Captain Mark Reyes (our Chief of Police) and his staff for doing a tremendous job keeping us safe during his first year as captain.

This year is the eleventh year of our Neighborhood Watch Program. It continues to provide a foundation for our community-based policing approach. Because our community is actively engaged with our public safety team, Temple City continues to place in the Top 50 of Safest Cities in California. In fact, last year we jumped 7 spots from 30th place to 23rd place on the list and Temple City is one of only three San Gabriel Valley cities on that high-regarded list. These achievements are the result of you— countless individuals taking it upon yourself to make Temple City an even safer community.

Public health has been at the forefront of all of our minds during the past two years, And so last year, Temple City took steps to directly help the community to stay healthy. With our community partners, the City held five vaccination clinics and administered over 2,000 vaccines. And during the Omicron surge earlier this year in partnership with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Community Advisory Commission we have set up a weekly COVID-19 testing site at Temple City Park. I'd like to thank our partners and organizers, Herald Christian Health Center, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Community Advisory Commission, and Chinatown Service Center for all their help in putting on these vaccination clinics and testing sites. I would also like to acknowledge our public safety team, dedicated Sheriff's Deputies, and Public Safety Supervisor, Bryan Ariizumi for being on the frontlines and taking on these critical service events. As

the pandemic unfolds, we will continue to provide timely COVID-19 situation summaries to our community.

I would like to convey our gratitude and applaud our Temple City residents for staying vigilant during the pandemic to keep our community safe. Currently, 81% of our population, ages 5 and up, is fully vaccinated with two doses. One of the highest vaccination rates in all of Los Angeles County. I encourage everyone who is eligible to go and receive their booster shots. Thank you to all our community members who have done their part to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 by getting vaccinated. It is pertinent we follow public health guidance from our public health authorities. Their decisions and recommendations are guided by data and science in an effort to best protect our community.

As we enter Year 3 of this pandemic, I know we are all feeling the exhaustion of wearing masks and not being able to see each other's smiles. I would like to use this platform to encourage everyone to keep following the masking and social-distancing guidelines put in place by LA County Public Health. Masks worn properly can save lives. I cannot stress enough the importance that we do our part as individuals so that collectively, we are a safer and healthier community.

Infrastructure & New Amenities

One of our most essential functions as a City government is the constant maintenance and improvements of our infrastructure. Even though several major rainstorms recently

hit the area, our city staff and partner agencies were well prepared to ensure that roadways and drainage systems were cleared of debris. Because of their great efforts, we “weathered the storms" without flooding or blocked roads. The City’s efforts to keep our roads in working condition and our storm drain systems stable are testament to the constant efforts of staff to maintain our existing infrastructure.

The City did not sit idly by during the pandemic, over the last 18 months we have invested over $2 million in road rehabilitation, leveraged nearly $3 million of State funding to build the soon-to-be completed Primrose Park. These investments utilized State and other non-City funds to invest in meaningful infrastructure projects in the City. Our roads still require very substantial investment, and neither one-time funds nor our existing funding sources will be able to keep us ahead of the ongoing cost and maintenance of repairing our roads, which are challenges that we have ahead.

Last April, we broke ground and began construction of our brand-new neighborhood park on Primrose Avenue. Thank you to our neighbors for your patience and understanding for the inconvenience, noise, and dust during construction. There have been some delays due to a nationwide supply chain issue. But as of this State of the City address, I am excited to announce the grand opening of the new Primrose Park is just around the corner. For the first time since the City’s incorporation in 1960, there will be a brand new park that will add much-needed green space to our neighborhoods. The new park will boast children’s play areas, shade structures, outdoor exercise equipment, and seating areas. It will also feature unique civic art elements and add 64 additional

parking spaces, all while preserving existing greenery. I look forward to seeing Temple City residents enjoying the new park.

Here is Parks and Recreation Commissioner, Lance Baroldi, who will speak a little more on the new Primrose Park and its amenities.

-play video clip-

Thank you, Commissioner Baroldi. The Parks and Recreation Commission has been working on this since the inception of the project, so there is no one better who can speak on this project. Thank you again.

Another new amenity coming to Temple City that has been in the works for years—the new and improved Temple City Library that is funded by both the City and the County. The library is much more than a place to read and borrow books and media. In recent years, its services have expanded widely and is an essential institution where the community goes to gather, learn, and grow. Construction was underway for much of the pandemic, but the County Library team is getting to the finish line with this project. While the temporary library served its purpose in the interim, I know I do not speak only for myself when I say that I have been eagerly awaiting the completion of this project. The library is an important pillar in our community that we have sorely missed. Here is our great Library Manager, who you may all be familiar with, Jing Li. She will introduce us to all the new amenities and what improvements we can expect at our renovated library.

-play video clip-

Thank you so much, Jing. The Temple City Library is an invaluable institution in our city and there is no one better than Jing to lead it.

CLOSING

Looking forward, the City is full steam ahead in its mission to continue serving the public. We will need continued participation from residents and businesses to help us chart the course ahead. For those who are joining us at this year's State of the City for their very first time, I would like to invite you aboard the Temple City Train. Whether it is through joining us at our City Council meetings, talking to a City Councilmember or City staff at City events, or even through social media or simply an email— any form of communication is meaningful and I encourage you to continue engaging with us.

Our City is made up of many crucial components that keep it running smoothly. Each staff member, each volunteer, and each community member is a vital gear to our city and fuels our community's progress. Every one of us contributes to pushing along this strong functioning train we all call home. While we are not a large City, during this pandemic we continue to improve in providing services that make Temple City a great place to work, live, and raise our families Through our hard work and flexibility, and as a resilient community, we have not only persevered during this time, we have grown stronger and thrived, I am proud that collectively we are indeed the "The Little City that Could."

Thank you for listening, I wish good health to you and your loved ones. Stay safe, and may God bless you and the great city of Temple City.