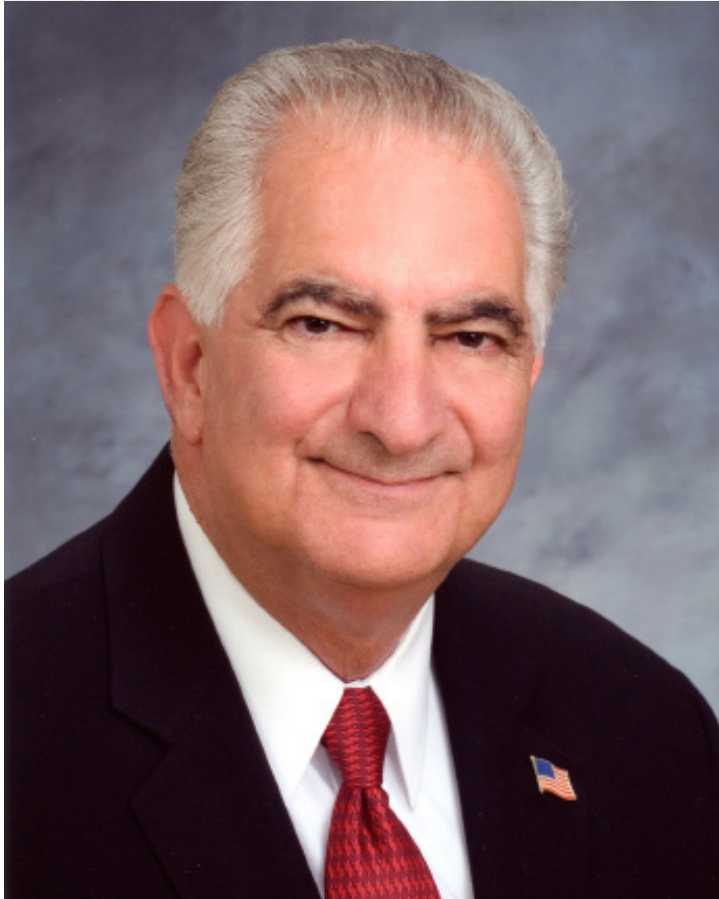




2010

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Mayor Frank Scotto

Frank Scotto was elected to his first term on the Torrance City Council in 2000 and garnered the mayoral seat in 2006. As mayor, he serves as the voting delegate to the following organizations: Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), South Bay Economic Development Partnership (SBEDP), and the Los Angeles County Sanitation District.

He is currently a board member and past president of the Lomita-Torrance Airport Rotary Club, having actively participated in this club for over 25 years.

A native Californian, born in Riverside in 1948, Frank Scotto has lived in Torrance for 50 years.

Good afternoon everyone! Welcome and Thank you all for coming today to hear about the state of our wonderful city – the City of Torrance. I would like to thank Gesuina Paras and Jin Chun along with CitiCable for helping with the State of the City. Also, I'd like to thank City Manager Leroy Jackson and the entire executive staff for their fine work this past year. And of course the City of Torrance would not be the great city it is without the dedication and hard work of all our city employees. Thank you all! I think we can all agree that 2009 has been a challenging year for all of us – nationally, regionally and locally. I know that many of you, and many people you know, are experiencing hardships in life as our country reaches such high unemployment rates. Yet, we can't help but feel lucky because so far, in Torrance, unemployment rates are only as high as 6%. This is low when compared to other cities, the county and the nation. And it's because overall, Torrance's foundations are serving us well. Together, our strong business community, active residents, dedicated nonprofit organizations and hardworking staff, turn challenges into opportunities. Together, we find ways to better serve the Torrance community. So today, I am here before you, to tell you... Torrance is doing well. Within a safe and secure environment, Torrance continues to fare better and achieve progress in spite of this challenging year.

Last year, as our community felt the impacts of a tough economy, City staff took greater steps to operate more efficiently and conserve our limited resources. Every department scrutinized its operations, carefully managed spending and made

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necessary adjustments to help in balancing our budget, which took a 2% cut. Today, we see the results of these hard but necessary choices. In spite of declining revenues, Torrance maintains a balanced budget! We've been able to protect services, and enhance programs and facilities. Not many cities can say that these days.

That said, our road ahead still isn't an easy one. As Albert Einstein once said: "In the middle of every difficulty lies an opportunity". Torrance hasn't been spared from the impacts of our tough economy. Presently, the City is working on balancing our Two Year operating budget, which includes a projected deficit of \$8 million. This is due to the decline in our revenue stream caused by lower sales tax and utility users' tax receipts. Our resources are limited, and the future of our regional and national economy continues to be uncertain. But we continue to plan ahead carefully. Presently, our management team has been working on finding ways to address our projected shortfall by looking at areas where we can save. Every department is looking for ways to do business differently – better, more efficiently, and with the continued high quality of service. At the end of this month, and around the beginning of June, we invite you to provide input during our budget workshops.

Torrance is the 4th safest city in Los Angeles County and 28th in the nation. Being a safe community enables us to offer programs, events, and classes; helps us to improve our facilities; and allows businesses to focus on growing, and giving back to the community. This past year, we were able to do this because of the tremendous efforts put forth by our public safety personnel – police and fire. They share the understanding that crime can best be reduced with a well-rounded approach, which includes education, prevention, intervention, enforcement and response.

In January of 2010, the Police Department implemented, "Team Policing." This new integrated approach brings more officers on the streets when

it's most needed. I want to thank the Torrance Police Officers Association for their cooperation in making this happen. Actually this may be hard to believe but we have doubled the number of officers on the street during peak hours!

We also now have new a Crime Scene Investigation unit that will be staffed with non-sworn individuals who will be experts in their fields. And our own DNA Lab that helps process every crime scene for evidence. It has also helped us resolve cold cases as reported by the Daily Breeze recently. As a result of the police department's efforts, we've already seen a decline in crime here in Torrance by 12.3%. This is a job well done by our Police Department!

Last year, I also mentioned that we are working on implementing the City's Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is a statement on where we want to be in the future, how we're going to get there and the people responsible in helping us get there. In response to this community-based Plan, the Police Department has fully staffed its community relations division. This allows TPD to engage community members as partners in making Torrance safe. Programs such as Neighborhood Watch, Business Watch, Map Your Neighborhood, email alerts and other social media communication tools are in place to help engage the community.

In the same manner, community outreach is a crucial part of our Torrance Fire Department's work. Through public education classes such as Community Emergency Response Team or CERT, our Fire Department also encourages community involvement when it comes to protection of one's life and property. Just one year ago we added a fifth paramedic without adding additional personnel. This was done with the cooperation of the Torrance Fire Fighters Association and we thank them for their support. Our Fire Department responded to the scene within five minutes or less after receiving the call for 90% of the time. Achieving this immediate level of response is also a result of constant efforts to be prepared and to streamline

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operations in the department. This past year, TFD's quality of service and response, helped it achieve the Class 1 Rating. The Torrance Fire Department is one of only 57 Class 1 Fire Departments nationwide and only one of 12 in California.

Having a safe community also means our children are safe to attend quality schools. This year, schools all over, including our own Torrance Unified School District, face a daunting challenge with future cuts. Over the past two years, TUSD has cut \$35 million dollars which resulted in the loss of 258 additional teachers. The City is aware of the District's challenges. So, this year, working together becomes even more important. And the City of Torrance has already been working with TUSD to help our schools. We've continued to meet with the School Board to explore ways on finding efficiencies and saving money. This is how the issue of having a joint election came about, and is currently on the ballot. By having a joint, stand alone election, the City and the School District, could be saving upwards of \$300,000 in an election year.

By saving today, we are also saving for our future. This applies, not only to our financial resources, but it also applies when we speak of our natural resources. Through the efforts of our Public Works Department, the entire Torrance community has taken a giant leap forward in the greening of our city. We've reduced our water consumption by 17%, and more residents are participating in green recycling. By supporting the Chamber's Green Business Expo, hosting an Environmental Fair, and other programs we hope to educate and encourage residents and businesses to develop greener lifestyles.

In the same way, with over 900 programs available, in our 46 parks and recreational facilities, Torrance continues to offer everyone – whether you're a child, an adult, or a senior citizen – a way to enrich their lives. Our programs and classes offer avenues to pursue hobbies, interests and educational needs.

With a diverse city such as ours, the community's needs are immense and continue to change.

Fortunately, we are able to find ways to address them by maintaining, improving and even adding to our facilities and programs.

For example, our Torrance Public Libraries were all renovated for earthquake safety. North Torrance is the last one and is in the final stage of construction. I encourage everyone to visit our libraries and see the outstanding work done.

We have four park projects in various stages of development. At the vacant Lomita and Anza Right-of-Way Property, we're developing a small park that will hopefully include an "Art in the Park" project. A new park is also being developed in Pueblo Park which is on Del Amo Blvd. Torrance and Columbia Parks are also changing to better suit your needs. At Wilson Park, improvements are also underway. We're working on the park pond to improve its appearance and water quality, and we're also fixing the amphitheater so we can host a wider range of activities. With these improved facilities, we continue to enhance our programs and services that we offer to our residents.

Speaking of improving facilities, we're also working on our infrastructure. Although not the most exciting responsibility of local government, it is highly important to talk about. Improvement of our streets and roadways has a broad impact as you travel throughout our city to conduct business. Additionally, improvement of our streets has a direct impact on an important issue in our community – traffic flow. So, with this year's improvements, we are hoping to make your day-to-day life better. Besides patching streets and filling potholes, we are working on the rehabilitation of major roadways. Last year, we finished Torrance Boulevard and this year, we're working on Crenshaw Boulevard. I want to thank all of you for tolerating the inconveniences as these improvements are made. This year, we're also extending Del Amo Boulevard from Maple to Crenshaw to improve traffic in Torrance. This may be the last piece of the puzzle in our on-going efforts to improve traffic flow in our City. A notable element about these two projects is that they are partially

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funded by Federal government grants.

This is an example of our continuing effort to get our fair share of Federal and State funds. By revitalizing our effort in this way, we gain additional resources that help us continue to make Torrance a place where the quality of life is enriched. We've already seen benefits! Besides these two infrastructure projects, Torrance Transit and our Emergency Preparedness program have reaped the rewards. We've been able to purchase 10 new, hybrid buses to replace some of our aging fleet. Hopefully, with these new, efficient buses, more people will be encouraged to ride. With Federal funds, our Police Department is also able to create and equip our alternate Emergency Operations Center. Last year, the City Council and City staff took a trip to Sacramento and Washington DC specifically to make sure our legislators are aware of our needs. It was a positive trip that assured us, our legislators listen and will hopefully continue to help us. I am happy to report that Torrance is now being recommended for a grant of \$3.3 million dollars to improve storm water at these 3 sumps: Amie, Entradero, and Henrietta.

All our efforts are driven by our commitment to be a city that remains responsive to the needs of the community. As we look to the State and Federal government for additional support, our dynamic business community remains a key partner of the City. Besides contributing to the City's revenue stream, businesses add to the quality of life through their investments, generosity, services and products, and skilled staff.

The diversity of our business community sustains the strength of our local economy. In spite of challenging times, Torrance, through the Office of Economic Development, continues to assist businesses in their needs. We not only try to attract new businesses as they generate more jobs for those seeking employment, but we also work to retain those already here. We are doing all we

can to help you.

Last December, we saw the arrival of the new Miyako Hybrid Hotel. Its presence in Torrance reinforces Torrance's position as a place for business. Recently, the City held its annual Torrance Advantage Awards where we honored the contributions of eight businesses. At this event, we also gave a special award to Miyako Hybrid Hotel for achieving Silver Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certification.

Another thing I am proud to report is that the Torrance One-Stop Permit Center is also anticipated to open this fall. With this refinement of service, the City will be able to offer businesses a more convenient way to handle their permitting needs. We're also looking to help businesses through the work that's being planned by the newly-established Tourism Business Improvement District. Spearheaded by leaders in the hospitality industry, the Tourism Board is working to help market the City of Torrance to encourage more people to visit Torrance, discover what we have to offer, contribute to our growth, and **SPEND THEIR MONEY!**

This coming year, we'll also continue our work on revitalizing our downtown area. There have been signs of progress with new businesses coming to the area, such as the Tortilla Cantina and the Downtown Grill. City staff also continues to meet with local businesses and residents in the downtown area to gain consensus and find creative ways to make downtown Torrance a viable place for businesses.

Helping our business community is vital these days. Businesses are valuable assets of our community. Without a doubt, their contributions to our revenues continue to help us, the City, provide the vital services, enriching programs, fun activities and memorable experiences for everyone in our community. As we face economic challenges, we feel especially fortunate that we have a strong business community.

So where are we today? Torrance is in a good position to withstand the challenges before us. But doing so, will take the contributions and cooperation of each and every one of us. So, let's make volunteerism a lifestyle!

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“...no matter how big government gets, and no matter how many services it provides, it can never take the place of volunteers.”

- Ronald Reagan, 40th U.S. president

With that, thank you for being here today and thank you for your interest in our Great City! In particular, I want to thank my colleagues on the City Council, and especially thank our City staff who continues to work hard everyday.

You can also watch this State of the City address on our City Cable. We have highlighted all of the projects I have mentioned today in a very innovative way. Again, thank you all for being here and thank you for your continued support.