



State of the City - January 28, 2016

Remarks by Santa Monica Mayor Tony Vazquez

GOOD EVENING SANTA MONICA!

We've accomplished **A LOT** of amazing work this year with the leadership of former mayor Kevin McKeown. Could all my fellow Council members and city staff here tonight please stand? Let's give them a round of applause to acknowledge them for all their hard work, and for achieving great things for our community.

Thank you.

We were not the only ones working hard this past year. The contributions from the resident and business community have helped Santa Monica remain one of the most innovative cities in the world and a leader in the nation's creative economy. It's one of the reasons why I'm so proud to call this place home.

You know, Santa Monica has been my home for more than 30 years. **THIS** is where my wife Maria and I raised our children. I've spent most of my adult life in this community. That's why it's my distinct honor to be your first Latino Mayor and to be speaking to you tonight at the State of the City. And let me tell you: **THE STATE OF OUR CITY IS STRONG!**

As Mayor, my commitment to the City of Santa Monica is to **GET THINGS DONE**. Tonight, I'd like to share a few of the things I'll be focused on.

Circulation is one of the biggest issues facing our city. Your city council is committed to explore **EVERY VIABLE MOBILITY OPTION** to efficiently move people around town, and decrease our dependence on cars.

The construction for Expo is finally **DONE**. Metro is finishing train testing. Earlier this week, they announced they are on schedule to launch in May.

Last year, our city welcomed 7.9 **million** visitors. With the extension of Expo Light Rail into Santa Monica, and with integrated service by the Big Blue Bus, those visitors, as well as commuters and residents will have viable public transit options that will significantly change the way we move in, and out of our city. These alternative modes of transportation will help reduce traffic congestion, auto emissions and, let's face it, behind-the-wheel frustration.

We will work with our businesses community to encourage employees, including our own city staff, to ride a bike, take public transit or carpool to work.

This spring, our new Colorado Esplanade will be **DONE** in time to welcome the train to our Downtown station. It will transform our downtown and create a gateway to our beloved and famous pier.

In July, we expect that the California Incline will be **DONE**, bringing this iconic roadway to seismic standards, making it more accessible with wider sidewalks, a new pedestrian bridge and dedicated bicycle lanes.

Keeping Santa Monica affordable is something on everybody's mind. While real estate prices soar in our city, **SOMETHING MUST BE DONE TO KEEP OUR COMMUNITY AFFORDABLE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.**

This year, we will look for a viable, sustainable funding source to support our efforts to generate more affordable housing options, making it possible for people of all income levels to live in Santa Monica.

How do you afford housing if you can't earn a viable wage? It's in our collective best interest to proactively support the Minimum Wage ordinance which my fellow council members and I proudly passed earlier this month, making us the second city in the region to adopt moving towards a \$15 minimum wage by 2020.

I want to thank everyone that volunteered for last night's homeless count. With the information we gather from the count, we'll continue to support transitioning the homeless in our community, especially our veterans, into permanent housing options.

Our City Council will continue to fight for local control of airport lands as mandated by voters with Measure LC. In 2016, look for your City leaders to push hard with federal elected officials and the FAA to resolve long-standing airport issues that have a negative impact on our community and our neighbors.

And this summer, our Council will adopt a comprehensive Downtown Community Plan. It's time to get this **DONE**. We need a plan that works for everyone. This plan will serve as a blueprint for the future of our downtown core. In the coming months, we will host workshops, focus groups and other grass root outreach efforts to touch as many Santa Monicans as we can. This is our downtown and I encourage everyone in this room to get involved.

We've got a full agenda ahead. Let's work together and GET THINGS DONE and make Santa Monica shine in 2016.