

## Mayor Robert Garcia's 2019 State of the City

As Prepared for Delivery

As of: 1/15/19 2:06 PM

Thank you – thank you.

Hey everyone.

Well if I look tan and rested, it's because I just got back from my honeymoon last night.

After 10 years in love and an awesome Christmas wedding, Matt and I are married.

So, I would like to start tonight by introducing you all to my husband—the First Dude of Long Beach—Matt Garcia.

Mayor – Hi Honey!

Matt – Hi. Wow – there are a lot of people!

Mayor – I know. How do you think it's going so far?

Matt - The singers were great! I love "In the Heights"!

Mayor – Well it's one of our favorite musicals. You have any advice for me?

Matt – Just be yourself and have fun!

Mayor – Ok – Love you and see you after the speech!

Matt – Ok. See you soon!

It's hard for me to believe that this is my fifth State of the City Address—and the **first one** of my second term as your Mayor.

But tonight, as we gather to hear our State of the City, there are hundreds of thousands of federal employees who are working without a paycheck or being docked pay.

And tens of thousands of teachers are striking for smaller class sizes and a fair wage.

Many of these federal workers who have earned the dignity of their paycheck, cannot afford to miss a rent payment or their mortgage. And we know that public school teachers are critical to our future as an educated society.

What is happening in Washington DC and here in LA County should concern all of us.

To **our** city employees here tonight—thank you for your dedication to Long Beach. You have my commitment we will always honor your work.

The tremendous progress over the last four years would not be possible without the city employees who pick up our trash, provide gas and water service, and maintain our parks. Thank you all.

And I want to thank our firefighters and police officers who put their lives in service to our city. You all make us proud!

## Mayor Robert Garcia's 2019 State of the City

As Prepared for Delivery

As of: 1/15/19 2:06 PM

These employees are led by a talented management team, who also deserve thanks for all they do—so thank you Pat West and our department directors. And to the team at the Mayor's office—thanks for the great work.

I also want to recognize and thank Supervisor Janice Hahn, our school board members, Community College Trustees, and the many city commissioners and leaders who are here tonight.

And to our City Attorney Charlie Parkin, City Auditor Laura Doud and City Prosecutor Doug Haubert, thank you for the great work in leading our City.

Finally, I want to give a special thanks to my colleagues on the City Council. This Council is an incredible team who deserve credit and thanks for all the progress you are going to hear about tonight.

We don't all agree on everything, but that builds a better democracy and makes our city stronger.

So, thank you—Vice Mayor Dee Andrews, and Councilmembers Lena Gonzalez, Jeannine Pearce, Suzie Price, Daryl Supernaw, Stacy Mungo, Roberto Uranga, Al Austin and Rex Richardson.

The progress we have made over the last four years has made the state of our city strong.

- When this team took office in July of 2014, Long Beach's unemployment rate was 9.8%—in 2018 we hit the lowest unemployment rate recorded in Long Beach—4.1%
- In my first State of the City address, I set a goal of building 4,000 new homes. We have exceeded that goal and are now building 5,000 new homes.
- Crime is hitting all-time lows, and we continue to have record low homicides.
- Cargo shipments at our biggest economic driver, the Port of Long Beach, is the best in history
- And we have launched the largest public infrastructure investment in a generation – fixing and paving hundreds of streets and sidewalks, and dozens of critical public buildings and parks.

Long Beach's success would not have happened without another critical partner—all of you.

Since being elected Mayor, and with support of the City Council, I placed eight city ballot measures before the voters and each and every measure won.

Voters passed Measure A in 2016 to rebuild our public infrastructure and make critical investments in our Police and Fire Departments.

Measure A has already generated more than \$140 million in new revenue. So far, Measure A has:

- Funded 41 new positions in our Fire and Police Departments and helped preserve 108 additional positions.
- Created new parks, funded 6 new playgrounds, and made improvements to more than 60 parks throughout our city
- Measure A has repaired and replaced 206 miles of more than 330 residential streets and paved dirt alleys and replaced sidewalks in every neighborhood.

## **Mayor Robert Garcia's 2019 State of the City**

As Prepared for Delivery

As of: 1/15/19 2:06 PM

- And has funded improvements to dozens of city facilities including both historic ranchos, our animal care shelter, and our fire and police academies.

Measure B placed 1% of any new general tax in a special rainy day reserve fund. To date, more than \$1.5 million in additional revenue has been placed in our reserves. And that amount will continue to grow.

Measure MA was passed by voters in June of 2016 to set tax rates on cannabis sales in Long Beach. Measure MA will ensure this new industry will generate revenue to support city services including public safety and health education.

Measure M, passed this last June, and protected vital city services by authorizing the transfer of surplus revenue from City utilities to the General Fund—as had been done for more than 60 years. And our water rates are still some of the lowest in California—less than Los Angeles, San Jose, San Diego, Oakland, San Francisco and Sacramento. Let's give our Water Commission and staff a hand for the great work they do!

And just last November, you strongly passed four charter amendments we placed on the ballot.

Measure AAA strengthened the City Auditor's Office, by authorizing the City Auditor to conduct performance audits of the operations and management of all departments, boards, agencies, and commissions. This Amendment enables the City Auditor to be an even more effective watchdog and advocate for our city.

Measure BBB simplifies future elections by limiting the Mayor and City Councilmembers to three terms—and ending a practice that allowed city officials to run as write-ins indefinitely. Measure BBB makes voting easier, especially for new voters and non-English speakers.

Measure CCC established an Independent Ethics Commission to hold local officials accountable to strong ethical standards. The Ethics Commission will help monitor our existing lobbying and campaign finance ordinances.

And Measure DDD established an Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to create new council district boundaries every decade after the census. Measure DDD establishes strong criteria for redistricting that keeps neighborhoods together and prohibits gerrymandering.

Together these eight measures represent historic changes to how our government is funded and structured. And I want to thank our City Council, especially our City Auditor and Councilmember Al Austin, for their support to put these measures before the voters.

Since 2014, I have proposed, and the City Council has adopted, five balanced budgets.

From year to year, we may see small deficits or surpluses, depending on revenue projections or pension markets—but come September, your City Council passes a balanced and responsible budget. Every. Single. Year.

And let's be clear, this is a fiscally responsible government. We have a double AA credit rating, and our financial reserves are at nearly \$56 million.

While Long Beach is doing well and our revenues continue to increase, we aren't immune to a national recession, or a citywide emergency.

Now is the time to start planning for the future.

## **Mayor Robert Garcia's 2019 State of the City**

As Prepared for Delivery

As of: 1/15/19 2:06 PM

It's time to create an even stronger financial reserve. For decades, Long Beach has maintained reserves between \$53 and \$56 million.

Tonight, I am calling on the City Council to increase our reserves to \$75 million.

This will take a few years, but is an important new goal for us to meet. I have asked Budget Oversight Committee Chair Mungo to partner with me to expand our reserves to ensure we are prepared to meet the challenges of the future.

Keeping residents safe is the most important responsibility of local government.

This last year, saw an 8.4% decrease in overall crime and a 16.5% decrease in violent crime—which means crime is at some of the lowest levels we have seen in decades. And we are still experiencing some of the lowest homicide rates in our history.

In 2018, our Police and Fire Departments responded to 280,000 calls for service—an average of 767 calls per day. And while that number continues to increase each year, we maintain an average response time of 4.5 minutes to priority one calls—one of the fastest times for any large city in the U.S.

Thanks to the work of your City Council, we are increasing support, technology, and fire engines across our city.

And to be clear, we know any assault or property crime can dramatically effect the victim or a neighborhood. We take every single crime seriously, and we will continue to work to make every neighborhood safer.

And in partnership with City Prosecutor Doug Haubert, we launched the Restoration Initiative for Safety and Employment (RISE)—which will provide free assistance to seal low-level misdemeanor or felony records, clear a minor warrant, or expunge a marijuana conviction. This new program will help residents get back to work and take care of themselves and their families.

And while there was much to celebrate this year, our Fire Department and City also suffered a tragic loss. The death of Capt. David Rosa, who was killed in the line of duty, reminds us of the risks that first responders face every day. Much love to the Rosa family and the Long Beach Fire Department.

While the safety of residents is critical to our success—so too is protecting our environment and creating a more livable city.

We continue to have one of the best park systems in the nation. Our Parks Department was again recognized as a Top 25 Park System in the U.S.—and we are creating new open spaces across the city, including wetlands restoration, playgrounds, soccer fields and dog parks.

Continuing another positive trend, our beaches earned 100% A and B grades from Heal the Bay this past summer.

Long Beach continues to be a national leader on sustainability. Despite the Federal Government's attempts to roll back environmental progress, we continue to respond to the urgent need to address climate change and other environmental challenges.

Last year, the city embarked on our first comprehensive Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. Our goal is to ensure the city—and our structures—are protected from the effects of climate change. And we are working with the California Coastal Commission and Commissioner and Councilmember Roberto Uranga to achieve that goal.

## **Mayor Robert Garcia's 2019 State of the City**

As Prepared for Delivery

As of: 1/15/19 2:06 PM

In 2018, we added 16 miles of bikeway to our network including a new Bike Boulevard that runs 10 miles from North Long Beach to Downtown.

We must move towards a multimodal future. Not only because it's an important way to fight climate change, but it also creates healthy communities.

Tonight, let's recommit to expanding bike lanes, creating dedicated busways, expanding sidewalks for pedestrians, and looking for new ways to retake public space for people.

As a member of the Metro Board, I've pushed for substantial investment in the Blue Line. The line, which is the oldest in LA County will soon shut down for months of upgrades, refurbished stations, new trains, and investment. This upgrade will be disruptive, but is necessary.

We have created and established a network of shuttles and bus lines to get people to and from work—including an express shuttle that will take riders from Downtown Long Beach to Downtown LA. And once we reopen the Blue Line, County Supervisor Janice Hahn and I are going to explore keeping that express shuttle service permanently.

And tonight, I am also asking our Long Beach Transit Board of directors to work with the City Council to launch a more aggressive program to repair and light bus stops across the city. Riders should not be waiting for their bus in the dark or without a bench to sit on. We have a great transit board and I know it's going to be a great year working together.

And thanks to the support of the City Council, our Long Beach Airport has embarked on a plan to become the most sustainable airport in the nation, building on the example set by the Port of Long Beach, which continues to be recognized as one of the greenest seaports in the world.

Long Beach is America's Port, and is leading the way towards cleaner air and a green economy. Let's give our Harbor Commission, the staff, and the hardworking men and women of the ILWU a big round of applause.

On the local level, the City Council passed, and I signed, a ban on polystyrene containers and established a new Green Business Certification Program. Ten businesses were certified last year, and 50 businesses have enrolled in the program. I want to thank Councilwoman Lena Gonzalez for leading on the Styrofoam ban and the fight against climate change.

And our Clean LB initiative is going strong. We have expanded our Clean Teams and they work hard to keep our city streets clean.

Another set of critical assets in our City are our arts and cultural institutions.

Since becoming Mayor, I have worked to increase public funding for the arts. In fact, we invest almost four times as much in the arts today, then we did four years ago.

I am proud this Council has boosted our support to arts and culture by allocating additional funds to the Long Beach Museum of Art, the Arts Council for Long Beach, the Municipal Band, the Museum of Latin American Art and our Ranchos.

The recently adopted 1% for the Arts on public projects has added more than \$300,000 in additional funding as of this year. These funds contribute to the great music and art produced by our Long Beach Symphony, Musical Theatre West,

## **Mayor Robert Garcia's 2019 State of the City**

As Prepared for Delivery

As of: 1/15/19 2:06 PM

Long Beach Opera, Camerata Singers, Musica Angelica, Long Beach Playhouse and the International City Theater. And thank you to Councilwoman Price for partnering with me to create 1% for the arts.

We also continue to fund PowWow Long Beach and other mural programs across the city. Some of these murals have been highlighted on the screen tonight. I remember when I was first elected, many referred to these murals as Graffiti—and others asked that I not support painting them on our city streetscape.

Well these murals are art, and in the last four years we have added more than 150 murals across the city. In fact, Long Beach, now has an extensive outdoor art collection we should be proud of.

Long Beach continues to be a leader in Civic Innovation. We have implemented a culture of innovation in every department at City Hall and are constantly working to improve how we provide services to our residents.

In 2015, we received a multi-million-dollar grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies to fund Long Beach's Innovation Team. That effort has led to the creation of our Office of Innovation.

Last year, I announced the Justice Lab initiative to provide new tools to first responders to divert residents in need of assistance out of the criminal justice system and toward much-needed resources like treatment and care. We are one of the only cities in the nation to have a mental health professional in our jail to assess and provide support.

The Office of Innovation is currently working with our Public Works team on how to make Long Beach cleaner by addressing illegal dumping and improving recruitment for the Police Department, so we attract the best and most diverse candidates.

And, this year we are launching the most ambitious upgrade to our city's financial and administrative software in decades. Believe it or not, your city has been manually entering time cards for 6,000 employees. Our new system launches this year, and I couldn't be prouder of our Tech and Innovation, Financial Management and Human Resources departments for their hard work.

We have moved this city toward the future. Embracing technology, digitizing records, expanding social media and reach, embracing open data, and hiring the next generation of leaders in every department in the city.

We are witnessing incredible progress in economic development. For the last few years, I have been talking about the tremendous amount of private and public investment happening in Long Beach—more than \$5 billion dollars.

That work accelerated in 2018. Several new projects were approved, and we started construction of the tallest building in Long Beach—the 36-story tower at Alamitos Avenue and Ocean Boulevard.

In 2019 many of the projects currently in construction will be completed—including the Park Broadway project across from City Hall, the expansion of the Aquarium of the Pacific, Second and PCH on the eastside, Douglas Park Long Beach Exchange, and the Oceanaire project on Ocean Blvd.

Long Beach is under construction—we have more than 70 major projects in development or under construction—and it's good for the economy and the long-term health of our city.

These projects will be joined by the new City Hall, Port Headquarters and Main Library which will all be completed and occupied this year.

## **Mayor Robert Garcia's 2019 State of the City**

As Prepared for Delivery

As of: 1/15/19 2:06 PM

Tonight, I am pleased to announce our partner in opening the Main Library—the Long Beach Public Library Foundation—has reached a critical milestone in its fundraising campaign.

The Foundation has raised more than \$2 million in pledges and is launching its public campaign to raise the remaining funds to reach its \$3 million-dollar goal. I want to congratulate the Foundation Board and Staff and thank everyone who has already contributed.

And thank you to Councilwoman Jeannine Pearce for supporting our new library and this campaign.

I also want to recognize our Economic Development Staff, the Economic Development Commission and Councilmember Rex Richardson for convening the “Everyone In” Economic Inclusion Initiative to improve economic opportunity for everyone in our City.

And as an educator, I know the best economic development and anti-poverty tool is access to a quality education.

The City of Long Beach is so lucky to have great educational partners. And in 2018 Long Beach State won the Men’s National Volleyball Championship. Go Beach!

In 2018, we celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Long Beach College Promise and the launch of a new dual admission program between CSULB and LBCC.

All three of our local institutions saw significant increases in completions in 2018—with notable progress for students of color.

And as I have said since day one of becoming Mayor—there is no better educational investment than investing in preschool and early childhood education.

We recently celebrated the opening of the new Educare Center at Barton Elementary in North Long Beach. This new pre-k and early childhood center is now the largest early ed center in the city, offering high-quality care to about 200 infants and toddlers.

Also, in 2018, our Health Department worked with the Early Childhood Education Committee and the Mayor’s Fund for Education to develop one of the most comprehensive citywide early childhood education plans in the state. This team is now working to implement the recommendations and provide additional support and services to young children and their parents.

In my first State of the City address, I set a goal for us of providing universal preschool in Long Beach. And while Long Beach Unified and other providers have served hundreds of additional pre-school students, we still have more work to do to close the gap.

As a member of Governor Gavin Newsom’s transition team, I am confident we are close to a state and local solution for a major expansion of pre-k. In fact, just last week, Governor Newsom called for universal preschool for all eligible four-year olds.

Let’s commit tonight to redoubling our efforts and make universal coverage a right for all our kids.

I also want to spend some time discussing the major challenges facing our City and how we are responding.

## **Mayor Robert Garcia's 2019 State of the City**

As Prepared for Delivery

As of: 1/15/19 2:06 PM

First was the closure of Community Hospital and its effect on emergency services in East Long Beach. For more than 100 years, Community Hospital has been an important part of our city and we were deeply concerned when the hospital closed.

But thanks to our City team, the Community Hospital Foundation, our local nurses, and other key partners we worked hard to develop a plan to reopen a full-service hospital at the Community Hospital site. I especially want to thank Councilmember Daryl Supernaw, who has been a great partner and leader to save the hospital, and our new operator MWN, who is working to open Community Hospital—this year.

And the biggest challenges we face in 2019, are the same challenges I identified last year: homelessness and housing affordability.

Long Beach, along with every major city in California is struggling with affordability and the statewide homelessness crisis.

While these remain our biggest challenges—we have made progress.

Early last year, the City Council adopted a new Land Use Element that created additional housing density across the city, with a focus on downtown, midtown, North Long Beach, and along transit corridors. This up-zoning across the city was not without controversy, but it was necessary. We must prepare and plan for the future. And I want to thank the dedicated team at Planning and Building for their hard work in preparing this plan.

We must build more quality housing—especially affordable housing so our low-income neighbors, seniors, students, and those experiencing homelessness have the ability to live in our city.

In my first State of the City, I set a goal of building 4,000 new homes. We are meeting that target, and benefiting from a boom of construction and economic development. Tonight, I want to set a new goal. Let's double our target to 8,000 total new homes by 2024.

And this time, let's ensure every new project we build includes quality affordable units or the developer pays into an affordable housing trust fund the city can use to create new homes for those who need them.

This isn't a new idea. It's called inclusionary housing and most major cities in California, including San Jose, San Diego, Pasadena and Irvine, have this policy. We are currently studying best practices and I'm asking the City Council tonight—to pass an inclusionary housing policy by the summer.

And as we build up, we need to ensure those who are struggling with their rent be given relief and support. I am hearing more and more from longtime residents how difficult the rental market is. People are genuinely struggling. And it's not just low-income folks.

Many students who attend California State University, Long Beach can't afford to live in our city. Housing affordability is the top concern among our students.

So, at the direction of the City Council, City staff has been working over the last several months, to develop a new tenant assistance policy that will provide important relief and protections for renters.

This new policy is being developed with input from both apartment owners and tenants—and will be in front of the city council in February. And we will ensure the community gets sufficient time to give input before adoption.



## **Mayor Robert Garcia's 2019 State of the City**

As Prepared for Delivery

As of: 1/15/19 2:06 PM

And housing affordability also directly effects our work to house those experiencing homelessness.

I want to recognize the team in our Health Department who have made our Continuum of Care one of the best in the state.

In 2018, this team helped house more than 1,100 people—and they have helped house nearly 5,000 people since 2014.

It is important to keep in mind that these numbers refer to real people in our community. Tonight—please welcome the Eland Family and Deirdra Dunford who have found homes thanks to our efforts.

While we can be proud of this progress, we know much more needs to be done to address homelessness.

Last May, the City of Long Beach launched Everyone Home Long Beach (EHLB), a new initiative to address the statewide homelessness crisis and its effects on our city. The Everyone Home Taskforce was led by CSULB President Jane Close Conoley, and was comprised of leaders from across the City—including those with lived experience of homelessness. Its purpose was to identify innovative approaches and develop new pathways into housing.

The final report of the EHLB Taskforce provides a comprehensive list of recommendations to enhance our existing services and identified targets for housing production that need to be developed to significantly reduce the number of people who experience homelessness in Long Beach.

The report calls for:

- 1,250 additional rent stabilized homes
- 225 additional emergency shelter beds
- 200 permanent supportive housing units

For the first time in recent history, we now have real targets and goals, developed by experienced practitioners, academics, and community leaders. And the report includes innovative ideas for prevention, workforce development, childcare, and improved governance.

Last year on this stage, I called for the creation of a permanent year-round municipal shelter.

Tonight, I am pleased to report we have reached an agreement to purchase a site to create a 125-bed, year-round city shelter.

The purchase agreement and the location will be before the City Council for approval in February.

I would like to recognize and thank the property owner Youna (Yoo-Nah) Kim and her family for working with the city to make this possible. They are here tonight.

In addition, the site provides additional opportunities to partner with LA County and others to develop workforce training opportunities and other important services.

Clearly you have to agree the state of our City is getting even stronger.

And I want us to think big and plan for the future.

## **Mayor Robert Garcia's 2019 State of the City**

As Prepared for Delivery

As of: 1/15/19 2:06 PM

All successful organizations plan ahead, and it's been more than 20 years since Long Beach last adopted a strategic plan.

Tonight, I am asking the City Council to begin work on a 2030 Plan for Long Beach. As we reach this new decade, we need to engage the community and create a comprehensive plan for 2030 that addresses major challenges such as climate change, housing, infrastructure, transportation, and education.

I want to thank Vice Mayor Dee Andrews who will be submitting legislation next week to begin this important planning process.

As we close tonight, I want to reflect on our values as Americans and Long Beachers.

We should not be a nation that builds walls, dehumanizes our neighbors, attacks refugees and immigrants, or devalues women.

I am so proud Long Beach remains a city that welcomes everyone and embraces our diversity.

From our perfect score on the LGBTQ City Index, to the new City Justice Fund which will provide assistance to immigrants who need help, we will support all people who live here.

And our City is committed to empowering women. I am extremely proud that earlier this year, women became the majority of those serving on our boards and commissions for the first time in city history. And I loved appointing each and every one of those amazing women.

While we cannot directly change federal policy from Long Beach City Hall, we can fight to protect our civil rights and democratic values. And I promise you, we will.

Thank you all for being here, thank you for loving your city, and let's continue to make it the best city in America.

Good night and Go Long Beach!