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State of Hollywood Address
Los Angeles City Council President Eric Garcetti
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(as prepared for delivery)

Last week I traveled from our city to Washington, DC, to witness Barack Obama speak for the first time to the country as our president. From the national mall to here in Hollywood we as Americans all listened carefully because like no time in recent history, the fate of our community is bound to the fate of our nation.

In this past year, we watched once-mighty Wall Street giants fall. We saw a record number of home foreclosures. Our unemployment rate is at a 15-year high and on Monday we saw 60,000 jobs lost on a single day.

Winter is upon our nation's economy, and its chilling impact is being felt in neighborhoods everywhere, even here amidst our 80 degree January days.

And yet today, even in tough times, just as there is a renewed sense of hope for our nation under the leadership of a new president we can still find optimism about the future of *our* community, our Hollywood.

Here, this optimism is rooted in more than the promise of moving in a new direction. For us, we chose a new direction almost a decade ago. And like the new buildings under construction on our streets, our optimism rises up from a strong foundation, one that we have built together. Upon that foundation, just look at what we have achieved in the last year:

- In 2008, Hollywood saw the greatest reduction in crime compared with every other part of the city – 10 percent. And Los Angeles has the lowest crime rate in 50 years. Let's thank Captain Girmala and the LAPD for this achievement.
- Not only did crime go down, we opened the first new high school in Hollywood in nearly a century.
- We passed billions in local bonds to improve our roads, public transit, schools, and community colleges and put people to work.
- We've got so much construction underway that the crane has become our second most common bird after the pigeon.
- We attracted world class entertainment like Cirque du Soleil and Madame Tussauds.

We were able to do this because of you: a community of leaders who have a

powerful belief in Hollywood as a place where the biggest dreams can be realized. Long ago, when Hollywood was first born, everything from avocados to wine grapes found fertile ground in this area. But now, Hollywood is where dreams take root, and it's a place where they grow because we have cultivated that fertile ground with hard work and strategic planning.

Today, my eighth time before you at this podium, I stand here confident in our future because the state of Hollywood is: ready. We're ready to weather this economic storm. And ready to show the rest of the country and the world what an economic recovery looks like.

Our recovery will not be easy, but few things worth fighting for are. Our present moorings may seem less sturdy, our future may seem more uncertain, and our recent past may suddenly seem more distant. But instead of fearing whether or not we will change, we must instead change whether or not we will fear. In these challenging times, we must not put our heads down to pretend that powerful gales are not swirling around us, but instead turn toward this wind and walk bravely into it, perhaps somewhat uncertain of our pathway, but not uncertain of our destination.

Let's not forget that Hollywood's first Golden Age was borne out of the Great Depression. During those tough times, some folded up and left. But many stayed and struck gold. Sam Goldwyn took over Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks' studio and began churning out big-budget quality pictures. Universal developed its staple of monsters, a century-spanning franchise. Sunset and Gower sprang to life for the first time with the Christie Brothers' short-film assembly line.

Our second Golden Age, too, has been dominated by community leaders and investors who value the long haul over the quick buck. We're not flippers or short-term profiteers; we are stewards.

In a year where mega-projects elsewhere faltered, we barreled towards our destiny as California's premiere destination. We topped out the W Hotel and Residences at Hollywood and Vine. We re-opened the Palladium as a concert venue. The Sunset and Vine Tower, and Palihouse both neared completion. Among others, we opened the Kress, Beso, Loteria Grill, Kitchen 24, Café Was, and Delancey.

Our Community Redevelopment Agency kept local tax dollars local, leveraging \$57 million in public funds to attract more than \$271 million in private investment to Hollywood.

As we brought the big, bold projects to Hollywood, we worked hard to create the infrastructure to support what we hoped they would bring – more residents, tourists, and visitors.

And this year, we tackled one of LA's most notorious challenges: traffic.

We set traffic-busting Tiger Teams loose on our streets, dislodging clogs and easing

traffic.

We launched a pilot program to extend Metro Red Line hours.

And most significantly, we brought together business owners, transportation experts, and community stakeholders to develop the Hollywood Transportation Strategic Plan. Our task force identified key transportation issues, created plans for addressing them, and began to make progress toward each goal. We're making it easier to valet your car, to hail a cab, and to find a parking space.

And now we're harnessing the power of technology to make it easier to get around.

How often have we been frustrated by traffic that could have been avoided if only we had known about that street closure or that traffic accident or that special event? It's a frustration that could be tempered simply by knowing - knowing about our problems and knowing our options.

Today, I am excited to announce the launch of NavigateHollywood.com, an interactive website that will be a one-stop shop for traffic and transportation information in Hollywood. Visitors can get information about public transit, parking, traffic conditions, bike routes and racks, taxi stand locations, and much more. Users can even sign up to receive email or text messages about street closures or special events and I encourage you all to do so.

NavigateHollywood.com is the first initiative of our Transportation Strategic Plan and I want to thank the Hollywood Property Owners Alliance, Sunset & Vine Business Improvement District, and the Hollywood Entertainment District – particularly Kerry Morrison – for their leadership on this project.

We all know our infrastructure isn't just streets and railways; it's also our people. Business owners want to know that if they invest here, they'll find the workforce they need. And we're making sure our families have the right educational opportunities to be ready for these jobs.

This year saw Bernstein High become home of the Dragons, and its opening helped relieve overcrowding at Marshall and allowed Hollywood High to return to a single-track schedule.

Los Angeles City College welcomed a great new president in Dr. Jamillah Moore and celebrated the opening of a brand-new 63,000 square-foot state-of-the-art library that will be a great resource for LACC students and the local community.

More than 7,000 residents visited the Hollywood WorkSource Center on the LACC campus to search for jobs and more than 200 students graduated from the Healthcare Career Ladder program that we started there. This program trains people to work in the growing health care industry and allows them to continue training their way up the career ladder while working.

Emerson College finalized its plans to make its West Coast home on Sunset Boulevard with a new facility designed by renowned architect Thom Mayne, joining AMDA and the Los Angeles Film School in turning Hollywood into a cutting-edge arts campus.

And with every addition to our neighborhood – the schools, the traffic improvements, the new shops, restaurants, residences, and office buildings -- we foster the growing sense and the renewed reality that Hollywood is a place where every block matters and where every block holds untold opportunity... not just at major intersections or along big thoroughfares, but everywhere in between.

Look at the new Dayton Heights Elementary School playground in East Hollywood. It serves not only the students at school, but the local community after hours and on weekends.

Look at Thai Town – designated as a national Preserve America Community making it eligible for federal resources that will ensure its unique neighborhood culture is maintained and shared.

Look at Vermont Avenue where the East Hollywood BID and the Hollywood Beautification Team planted more than 100 trees.

Look at what Urban Outfitters did with the alleyway running through its property. They transformed it from community eyesore to community asset, and now we're working with many of you to create our first pedestrian alley just north of that complex.

Look at the reduction in graffiti – since we launched UNTAG, graffiti has gone down more than more than 85 percent in Hollywood and East Hollywood – thanks to you.

Like so many community efforts, the sum of our work has been much larger than the increments in which we accomplished it. Project-by-project, block-by-block, we've cleaned up our act and it's brought Hollywood back to Hollywood.

Ten years ago, the entertainment industry wouldn't have had lunch in this town. Today, 90028 is an industry business card fixture. From Technicolor to Live Nation to Eastwest Studios, it's clear that "DATELINE—HOLLYWOOD" is no longer just a journalist's cultivated fantasy. It's a geographic reality.

And we're not just a one-industry town. From our growing healthcare industry, whose progress is embodied in new buildings at Kaiser and Children's Hospital, to cutting-edge new economy companies like LegalZoom.com that call Hollywood home, Hollywood knows what business-friendly means. And side-by-side with the most dynamic small businesses in the city, Hollywood has long been the beneficiary of an organized community that works together to get things done.

This year, the Hollywood Entertainment District won its renewal with 91 percent support. It will enhance our neighborhood until its next renewal in the year 2018.

I'm proud - and I have to think that our dear Johnny Grant would have been, too — that with leadership from the Hollywood Chamber, Metro, our Department of Public Works, and others, we've put together more than \$2.5 million of the \$4 million dollars we need to restore the Walk of Fame.

Thanks to the Chamber and the Hollywood CRA, we've completed the feasibility study on the Hollywood Cap Park and have established a non-profit organization to raise funding for the Environmental Impact Report. Our dream of building a central park over the 101 Freeway is another step closer to reality.

We've seen how important parks can be not only to our general quality of life, but to safety in our communities. During the summer, we brought a program that I mentioned to you last year called "At the Park After Dark" to the Hollywood Rec Center and Lemon Grove Park. We kept them open late into the night offering fun and educational sports, arts, and music programs and a sense of community to hundreds of kids with no place else to go. In July and August this summer, there were less than half as many gang-related incidents in LAPD's Hollywood Division compared with the previous year. And there was a more than 25 percent decrease in crime in our parks. It wouldn't have happened with the concerted effort of many in this room, and I particularly want to thank Kaiser Permanente for their generous support.

And now we've organized to meet a seemingly insurmountable challenge: ending homelessness. This past March, the Hollywood BID, Hollywood Chamber, People Assisting the Homeless, Hollywood youth homeless service providers and a collaboration of business, religious, and community leaders took the first step in our strategic effort by leading a headcount of those who sleep on our streets. We used the information and the momentum of community involvement to develop a plan to meet their needs, and then we began working with individuals to find them shelter and services to get them off the streets and help them stay off.

One of these individuals is Torrie, a man who suffers from schizophrenia who has spent years on the streets of Hollywood. Early last summer, Torrie was taken from the streets on several occasions to a local hospital to receive emergency medical care. His emergency care and hospital stays probably cost taxpayers close to \$100,000 in that one month alone. In the weeks that followed, our coalition worked to find him shelter and get him medication. Total cost: \$800. Getting him off the streets and back onto his feet: priceless.

Each life we change in Hollywood is a new page in history. But as we review our most recent chapter we also remember the lives we lost, giants who wrote so many of the pages that came before.

First, let me pay tribute to one of our historic heritage's most staunch defenders,

Robert Nudelman. Among other things, we worked together to save the Palladium from the wrecking ball and to restore the Hillcrest Apartments, and I want to take a moment today to acknowledge his love for and belief in our Hollywood. The streets outside would be sorrier indeed without his eye for beauty and his dogged protection of our history.

Of course we can't talk about the Hollywood in Hollywood without also mentioning another dear friend, Bill Hertz. Bill was there when Mann Theaters first expanded the Chinese. He was there for the dedication of the Walk of Fame. He was there for our police department, always supporting their efforts to protect and serve this community. He was there for Hollywood. He was there especially for our children - I can't count the number of them who went to the movies because of Bill's generosity and spirit. Whatever the number is, I'm pretty sure Mann Theaters didn't know it either.

And earlier this month we lost a screen legend and Hollywood friend with the passing of Ricardo Montalban. Ricardo came from Mexico and made his dreams come true in Hollywood. From Fantasy Island to Star Trek to those unforgettable Chrysler Cordoba ads, he was a consummate performer and the Montalban Theater on Vine Street will remain as a fitting tribute to his talent as an actor.

Robert, Bill, and Ricardo embodied all of the values that President Obama spoke of last week as being those on which our country's success depends: hard work and honesty, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism. We in this room share those values. Better yet, we embody them, too, and so will those who will occupy these seats in generations to come. It's why Hollywood has come to be recognized as a textbook example of how to bring a community back and why, in the coming years, we will make Hollywood an example of how to move a city forward.

I said earlier that the fate of our community is bound to the fate of our nation. And I believe that's true.

Thousands of people have come to Hollywood to seek their destiny - whether in business or entertainment or even public service. This Saturday will be one year to the day since a skinny Senator from Illinois stood on the stage of the Kodak Theater and declared, "We can fulfill the destiny that America wants to see." And in Hollywood it's truer today than it was even then. We can fulfill the destiny that America wants to see.

Will we protect families from foreclosure? Will we keep industry giants and mom-and-pop businesses afloat? Will our Main Streets stay vibrant and prosperous? Will we clean up blight in our cities and create more clean, safe places for our kids?

If there is any place ready to show the country how it can be done, it is here in Hollywood.

We've done our homework and created the infrastructure needed to support the

projects that will stimulate our economy and put people back to work. We've got committed long-term investors as private-sector partners in making Hollywood a safer, more desirable place for residents and employees. We've studied our community block-by-block and we've identified places with potential and opportunity. And most importantly, we've got you: a community that is experienced, organized, passionate, and ready to lead even in these challenging times.

Hollywood, this is a defining moment for us. What happens here will have a profound effect on America's belief in itself. We know that this country and the world watch Hollywood's every move. And we know from experience that that belief is what inspires the commitment, the investment, and the hard work needed to lift us out of these dark times.

Our new president – our first big city president in more than a century -- has made clear that he, too, believes the vitality of local communities will be crucial to our nation's success. Neighborhoods across the country are going to play a starring role in a national economic recovery unlike any before. So now is the time for Hollywood to shine those crossbeams brighter. No matter what the coming months may bring, they will shine brighter than we ever knew we could, marking the fertile ground of a neighborhood where dreams have always come true.