

Good morning, welcome to Carson – the Jewel of the South Bay! Please join me on a special journey as we visit all the places and faces that makes Carson shine

As we move through our city, we'll talk about the challenges we've met and the victories we've celebrated. Carson is our home, our heart, and our community-- there's no place like it.

Back in 2020, I accepted not just a role but a mission: to lead Carson to a brighter, stronger future. It wasn't easy, especially with a pandemic and some tough times like the warehouse fire and the Dominguez Channel emergency.

Pilot: Mayor, we're all set for an amazing ride. Remember, you've got more than just people counting on you today – you've got their dreams and stories with you.

MAYOR: Alright, Captain, let's get this show on the road and take to the skies! As we fly over Carson, let's remember where we've been and get excited about where we're heading. They say to truly know a place, you need to see it from every angle. We're about to see Carson from a perspective as dynamic as our community.

Welcome aboard! Below us lies a city united by the diligence, dreams, and dedication of every Carson resident. Each corner of our city tells a story of resilience, innovation, and a shared commitment to a brighter future.

What a ride — Here we are at the Dignity Health Sports Park. This isn't just the home of the LA Galaxy; it's a symbol of Carson's vibrant spirit and global presence, where dreams are pursued and victories delivered.

We're propelling Carson towards a future where sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity light the way. Our infrastructure projects, green initiatives, housing developments, and economic strategies are commitments to every resident. It's an exciting time in Carson!

As the 2028 LA Olympics approach, we'll be ready to shine. Together, we'll welcome the world and share our story — a city where every step leads to greatness.

Speaking of bringing the world to our doorstep, this year, Carson had the honor of welcoming none other than Lionel Messi, the world's most celebrated soccer player, to Dignity Health Sports Park. His visit was a proud moment for Carson – it allowed us to showcase our ability to host international icons and unite people through the universal language of sports.

Before I go any further, I want to thank my family--my husband Harry, my children Kesha and Deshon, and all my grandchildren, whose love continues to be my guiding light. It's a privilege to serve as your mayor and I will never stop working for you.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to my colleagues — Mayor Pro Tem Dr. Jawane Hilton, Council Member Cedric Hicks, Council Member Jim Dear, Councilwoman Arleen Rojas, our City Treasurer Monica Cooper, our City Clerk Dr. Khaleah Bradshaw, our City Attorney Sunny Soltani and our Executive team and all our city employees, who come to work every day to make our city great.

Your presence today, and every day, is a testament to the collaborative spirit that propels our city forward.

Today we come together...to reflect upon the progress we've made, and look forward to what I've planned for Carson's future.

When I was elected, I made a commitment to improve and enhance our city's infrastructure. I am pleased to report that we have allocated \$32 million dollars to improve our streets, sidewalks, and filling pot holes. This is the first time in the history of the city that we have made such a substantial financial commitment. This project isn't just about today, It's also about preparing for tomorrow and the future of every Carson resident.

Safety is my number one priority. Today I am proud to report that we have implemented over \$5 million dollars to a project consisting of high-definition security cameras at all of our city parks and cameras have been installed at all entrances into the city.

So, if you are coming to Carson to commit a crime and you think you won't be seen... I see you!

In addition, we have installed speed trailers to monitor your speed in our four council districts. My colleagues and I are committed to making Carson a place where families and visitors feel safe and secure.

The unhoused population is an issue affecting all cities. Our city was proactive in response to this, by introducing an innovative solution with our new Public Safety Engagement Team. This team is at the forefront of our efforts to aid the unhoused.

Since its inception, the division has achieved remarkable results, including successfully placing 40 unhoused individuals into temporary and permanent housing. This team is to be commended

for their hard work and dedication. The money that the City Council allocated has been well invested.

In 2023, the city council made a decisive move to protect our Mobile Home park residents by approving the Mobile Home Park Overlay District. This commitment from the Council and myself, ensures our mobile home park residents have an affordable place to live. Property owners of mobile home parks must now seek a zoning change for redevelopment and must also provide comparable and affordable homes.

I am committed to preserving Carson's diverse and inclusive housing, making sure everyone has a place to call home.

2023 was a landmark year for our veterans . I spear-headed a Resolution that speaks volumes about our commitment to those who served our nation. This resolution focuses on increasing veterans' housing... Because I am committed to ensuring that our veterans are part of a community that truly values and supports them.

To the residents of the Carriage Crest Park community, you will soon enjoy a newly transformed park. We have increased this 4-acre park to 15 acre's. Picture this – new baseball and soccer fields. It will also include a dog park, basketball and pickle ball courts, a new concession stand, restrooms and other amenities. This is all made possible by combining a \$13 million state grant with an additional \$3 million from the city's General Fund.

To the community around Foisia Park, your voices have been heard and the transformation you've envisioned is unfolding. We're improving everything — from the shaded picnic areas to the sports field lighting. There will be a new children's playground area, community stage, park marquee sign and an improved outdoor exercise area. We received a \$4.2 million dollar federal grant to make this project a reality.

I made a recommendation, and my colleagues supported it...all youth sports registration fees in Carson are now free! I would like to thank Faring Capital for the generous donation of \$350 thousand dollars. These funds will be used to purchase youth sports uniforms. I want all of our children back in the parks!

Wow! Let's take a moment to celebrate a landmark achievement for Carson. Our city's reserve has hit an all-time high of \$222 million. I think that deserves a round of applause... This is *a first* in our city's 55-year history!

Under my leadership and directives to staff, we've fortified Carson's financial backbone like never before. My guiding principle is fairness. It has always been my philosophy that everyone should pay their fair share. I want to refocus on the measures that made this happen:

Measure K- the transaction and use tax

Measure R- the utility user tax

Measure C- the oil business tax....

And look at the result. – I want to personally thank our residents, who voted and supported these measures. Also, MPT, Dr. Jawan Hilton, CM Cedric Hicks, our City Attorney Sunni Soltani, our City Manager and staff for supporting and working diligently to make my vision a reality.

Just to put things into perspective, prior to 2020, the City maintained a budget surplus of around \$20 million. Now, under my leadership, and support of my colleagues, our reserve is at a historic high. It's all about building a Carson that not only thrives today, but also in the future.

To date, we have received approximately \$87 million in unpaid oil business tax. I want to personally thank our residents, who voted and supported these measures. Also, MPT, CM Hicks, our City Attorney, the City Manager and city staff for supporting and working diligently to bring my vision to fruition.

Just to put things into perspective, prior to 2020, the City maintained a budget surplus of about \$20 million. Now, under my leadership, our reserve is at a historic high of \$223 million. It's all about building a Carson that not only thrives today, but is set up for financial success long into the future.

Carson is on the move, and we've got some big wins to share...

First up, Lomita Boulevard is getting a makeover, thanks to a \$2 million dollar grant from Assembly Bill 102. Then, there's my green initiative..."The Urban Forestry Master Plan". With a \$1 million dollar boost from the USDA Forest Service...this grant will allow us to plant trees throughout the city. In addition, we are proud recipients of the "Conserving Black Modernism Grant" from the National Trust for Historic Preservation...

This \$150,000 grant will fund the production of a Historical Structure Report for Carson City Hall. This confirms our commitment to conserving our city's rich architectural and cultural legacy.

Today, we continue to strengthen our working relationship with Cal State University, Dominguez Hills. In 2021, we pledged our commitment to working with each other by starting the "Town and Gown Promise," which was followed by the Small Business Growth Academy in

2022. Today, I am proud to announce that the City Council supported my Mentorship Program Initiative, by appropriating \$100,000 so that students can ‘earn while they learn.’ This program is our promise to support our future leaders of tomorrow.

Thank you, Dr. Thomas Parham, and your staff for working with me on making these initiatives a reality.

This year, Carson reached across continents to form a special bond with the City of Ah-ka, Nigeria. It's a big step for us, making Carson global. We're opening doors to new friendships, better ways of living, and brighter futures. We're excited to see where this journey takes us.

As we turn our attention to exciting advancements in our Innovation & Sustainability projects, we find ourselves at the forefront of an energy revolution right here in Carson. We are proud to unveil several significant renewable solar energy projects in partnership with Prologis and the Clean Power Alliance.

We will soon mark the commercial operation of three pivotal solar installations with a combined capacity of over 3 megawatts. The renewable energy that is produced from these projects will feed electricity directly into our local grid system...reducing transmission losses, minimizing disruptions, and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.

2132 E. Dominguez St, Carson CA (0.96 megawatts) (District 3)
22351 South Wilmington Ave, Carson CA (1.8 megawatts) (District 4)
22673 South Wilmington Ave, Carson CA (0.6 megawatts), (District 4)

But we're not stopping there. By 2025, there are plans for three additional renewable energy projects to come online.

21175 Main St, Carson CA 90745 (.68 MW) (District 1)
2201 E Dominguez, Carson CA 90810 (1.32 MW) (District 3)
20500 Fordyce Ave, Carson CA 90810 (1.38 MW) (District 3) "

As your Mayor, I am thrilled to champion these groundbreaking and important projects! The solar panels are powering our City's journey toward becoming a cleaner, greener, and more resilient City. These projects seamlessly align with one of my new six initiatives. "Innovation and Clean Energy Hub": Actively participating in the development of clean energy projects ensures that our community has a significant voice in determining the future of our energy landscape. Thank You to the Prologis Team! and let's hear a few words from Natasha Keefer, Head of Origination and Power Marketing

Last year, I shared plans for 20 Tesla superchargers at the Carson Event Center. Since then, there's been a significant shift, these superchargers will now support all makes and models of electric vehicles. Carson is now set to receive the latest Supercharger model, the V4, one of the first in California. Tesla is funding this project, covering design, construction, and maintenance costs for the next 15 years.

We're also expanding our effort with an additional 128 charging ports planned at 11 city-owned sites. We have also applied for the SCE Charge Ready Transport program and is slated to receive 4 new EV charging stations that will be used to support our future electric bus fleet.

We're actively pursuing other EV charging projects, and by the end of 2024, we anticipate having approximately 160 operational EV charging stations to be located at City facilities. These projects are being planned and implemented at little to no cost to the City.

Now, let's shift gears to an initiative that is powering our future. I'm talking about two Battery Energy Storage Facilities, one in District 1 and the other in District 4. By balancing electricity supply and demand, these facilities contribute to grid stability and resilience... They can provide additional power during high demand and help prevent blackouts. This aligns with my "Innovation and Clean Energy Hub initiative" and illustrates our commitment to innovative and clean energy solutions.

I want to introduce Kevin Smith, CEO of Arevon, who will share more details about this \$350 million dollar investment into the City of Carson.

I am proud to share how drones may soon become our eyes in the sky. The City has recently taken a significant step by approving a new policy and guidelines allowing for responsible drone usage within the City. I envision a seamless integration of drones, that can enhance city services and improve safety. Carson is not just growing; we're evolving, with an important focus on affordable, high-speed internet and digital inclusion.

It's crucial to assess our community's needs, identify gaps, and leverage opportunities for enhancing high-speed Internet and related infrastructure. That's why we've initiated a comprehensive broadband assessment study. By identifying and addressing these critical factors, we're laying the groundwork for a more connected city. In the coming weeks, the city council will be considering both short-term and long-term solutions to address the infrastructure challenges and implement policies and programs to support this endeavor. Together, let's build a community where no one is left behind in the digital age.

I take pride in acknowledging the recent progress in our city's environmental stewardship. In December, The City received the gold-level energy achievement award through the South Bay Energy and Climate Recognition Program. This reflects our continued commitment to energy conservation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and embracing renewable energy solutions. In the realm of economic development, we've focused on fostering a vibrant business environment. I'm thrilled to see the completion of major developments that represent many opportunities for all.

Over the past 3 years, Carson has truly come together with the support of local businesses, developers, city leaders, THE Economic Development Commission, and community members...to create our first-ever Economic Development Strategic Plan. Our goal is to create an environment where creativity thrives, businesses prosper, and our entire community benefits. We've laid out seven new initiatives to assist with this. While we were nominated as one of the top 5 most "business-friendly" cities, my goal is for Carson to win the top prize.

In July of 2023, we took a significant step forward to improve city services. We hired TransTech to staff the City's Building and Safety Division. By adding TransTech's expertise, we're activating our vision to 'Streamline Carson' – a program to ensure that our city's development moves at the speed of our ambition.

This efficiency is reflected in real numbers. For example, Building and Safety Services has seen significant reductions in the amount of time it takes to review plans. In just over two months TransTech has issued 314 permits and reviewed 164 plans. Thank you to Councilwoman Rojas for recommending this change.

At this time I would like to introduce you to Melissa Demirci representing TransTech. As we plan for a prosperous future, let's recognize the backbone of our local economy — our small businesses. Through the City of Carson Small Business Grant Program, fueled by the American Rescue Plan Act, we were able to extend a helping hand to those hit hardest by the pandemic. We allocated \$1.5 million to support 66 small businesses with grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000 dollars to aid in their recovery. We are determined to see every small business in Carson survive and thrive.

To rejuvenate Carson's business landscape, we've rolled out the Commercial Façade Improvement Program. Through this initiative, we've allocated \$1 million from our General Fund, exclusively aimed at revamping city corridors. Eligible business owners can receive up to \$25,000 for individual storefront improvements, and up to \$250,000 for multi-tenant commercial plazas. It's more than just a facelift; it's about creating spaces that reflect our collective spirit and enhance quality of life.

Carson is growing. Today, I'm thrilled to showcase the latest chapters in our city's story. From the sleek, modern lines of the Figueroa Mixed-Use Project to the family-friendly vibes at the Vivian Project, each one is designed with you in mind. We transformed the Avalon Church site into 30 Condos and also developed the Carson Loft Apartments, a 19 unit multiple family residential development.

We are also proud to introduce the Anastasi, a 50 unit multi-family housing development, which will redefine what it means to live in luxury. Another new development will be Carson Place... A luxury residential development consisting of 764 multi-family units. It will include ten thousand square feet of restaurants and over one hundred eleven thousand square feet of open space.

These projects would not be possible without developers wanting to invest in Carson. And now I would like to introduce you to Jason Illouljian, CEO of Faring. Carson, get ready to fall in love with where you live, work, and play.

There has been much conversation about the development of the 157 acres, planned for the Fashion Outlet Mall. As your mayor, I have been in constant communication with the developers and I am committed to pursuing the necessary steps to make this project a reality.

This year, let's pledge to not only dream of a better tomorrow but to build it with our own hands. Together, we are unstoppable. The state of our city is strong, and, with your help, it will only grow stronger. Here's to our city, to our journey, and to a brighter future.

Thank you, and God bless the city -and people- of Carson.