

AMONGST THE STARS

State of Hollywood Address
Hollywood Chamber of Commerce
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This past Labor Day, I took a walk with my father.

We re-traced the footsteps taken by our city's founders, the *pobladores*.

Blessed by an Indian prayer, we started before the sun rose in San Gabriel and walked nine miles to the west until we reached Olvera street, next to the L.A. River, the site of our city's founding settlement.

The Los Angeles River is central to our city's origin. Its full name is *el rio de nuestra senora de los angeles de porciuncula*.

It was there, some years before the *pobladores'* walk, that father Juan Crespi looked upon the verdant banks, gave us our name and said, *here we will build a great mission*.

You know the end of the story.

Or rather, you know that the story has no end.

Unlike San Gabriel, or San Juan Capistrano, or Santa Barbara, Los Angeles never built a mission—but a village, a pueblo, was born that we all now call home.

A few miles to the west of El Pueblo, almost ninety years later, another village was born in the foothills to the south of the Cahuenga pass.

It was built by men and women whose last names were Wilcox and Cole, who named the streets after their sons and daughters, like Ivar and Selma, even a friend named Mrs. Highland Price.

The earliest settlers were farmers, and on this frostless and fertile stretch of land, they grew lemons and oranges, strawberries and roses, raised sheep and cattle and grew the first avocado in the state. In 1871, the first neighborhood business opened—a Chinese laundry and grocery where Sunset and Cahuenga now meet.

Those were two unique moments in Los Angeles history, when the future spread out, unknowable but bright.

In 2007, as we assess the state of Hollywood and the city beyond, we also stand at a uniquely bright moment in our history.

We have the lowest crime we've known since 1956.

We have the lowest unemployment rate since 1976.

And we are in the strongest financial shape of any big city in the country.

Taken together, these three things are the foundation for our prosperity.

But what will we do with that prosperity?

Who are we?

Who do we want to be?

And while Crespi's mission was never built brick by brick, we now ask how will we build our mission, block by block.

In Hollywood, we're through speaking of comebacks. We're already back.

The state of Hollywood today is leading Los Angeles. Showing the whole city how to do it right.

Hollywood shows how our big city begins with a great small town.

Hollywood is not ours: it is everyone's. On the boulevard, the whole world is at home.

Our community, Hollywood, is the blueprint for a great Los Angeles.

Here, we know how to build a new urban infrastructure.

Here, we epitomize partnership

And here, we have shown what a pro-business environment can do.

First. The infrastructure.

A city choked by traffic has finally said enough is enough. The Westside wants a subway to the sea and the Valley and Eastside and South Los Angeles want an end to gridlock. Here in Hollywood we have a subway. We have rapid bus lines. We even have the Holly Trolley and pedestrian-oriented streets.

We've got parking, too, not as an end unto itself, but as something to support our housing, businesses and leisure. We have thousands of spaces in well-run lots, ready to be managed efficiently.

We've invested in an infrastructure of safety, too. Our police captains have taken advantage of new technology, like safety cameras, and a strong community, with leaders who have made Hollywood one of the city's safest neighborhoods.

Second: our public-private partnerships are a model for our city.

Our Community Redevelopment Agency has taken a public investment of \$642 million dollars and brought in \$3.3 billion in private investment.

Kaiser and Children's hospitals have invested in new buildings, community partnerships, and local hiring. In their research centers, diseases will be cured, in their hospitals, lives will be saved.

We've seen construction of the first high school built in Hollywood in 80 years. Five other new schools are under construction or finished and our city college is rewriting its curriculum and rebuilding its campus.

Our business improvement districts have set the citywide standard for property owner activism: This year, the Hollywood entertainment district celebrates its 10th anniversary and the media district continues its good work as well. And even more exciting, this year we inaugurate two new business improvement districts: one at Sunset and Vine, the other along the Vermont corridor.

Lastly, we've fought for and defended a business environment that fosters growth.

The Chamber fought for tax reform. The Garcetti-Greuel Plan delivered it. We have returned \$92 million to Los Angeles businesses. That money has been invested in jobs. It's been invested in better lives.

The Nielsen Company saw what we could do and chose Hollywood, bringing more than two hundred jobs at average salaries of greater than \$70,000.

And I worked with the governor to successfully renew and expand Hollywood's state enterprise zone, rewarding businesses great and small for expanding in the community and hiring in the community.

Business is here in Hollywood to stay and to grow.

And to do business in Hollywood, you must understand that content is king.

Our infrastructure, our partnerships, our business atmosphere have allowed creativity to flourish. We've created profit. We've created investment. And most importantly, we've created quality of life.

Take **music**, for example.

In a single neighborhood, in a quarter mile, you can sign your record deal at Capitol Records.

You can record your album at Ocean Way

You can buy the album at Amoeba Records.

Or you can see it performed live at the Palladium or the Music Box, at Safari Sam's or at the Hotel Café.

For you **foodies**,

You can walk through Southern California's largest open-air farmer's market each Sunday.

You can visit Los Angeles' best restaurants

You could even work alongside the most famous chef in the world, at Wolfgang Puck's corporate headquarters.

And what would Hollywood be without **movies**?

You can make 'em at Paramount Studios, who shot *Dreamgirls* entirely here in L.A.

You can "fix 'em in post" at Technicolor, who recently broke ground on its eight-story state of the art facility at Sunset Gower studios

And you can see 'em at Arclight Cinemas, or Grauman's Chinese, or El Capitan—the best movie houses in our land.

This is not just a good time. This is how we make the good life.

There's room for everyone: the tourist who has more to see than ever before, the resident, who has a good job in her own neighborhood, and the movie star, moving into a Hollywood Boulevard loft, where movie stars have not lived for 80 years.

But this is not an isolated dream: our community of Hollywood has drawn the blueprint for a livable Los Angeles.

A blueprint for a city where you can live near where you work near where you play.

A city where the hours you don't have to spend in your car, you can spend with your family.

A city where children can go to school near where they lay their heads. Where they can find places to play like Yucca Park. There we built a new soccer field in a park that just a few years ago could have been overrun by gang members--*but we didn't let it happen.*

In Hollywood, we showed them a comeback with a conscience.

There is one project that brings this all together: the mixed-use, half-billion dollar hotel-retail-residential development called Hollywood and Vine.

Hollywood and Vine. This year, the most famous intersection in the world stood for the intersection of Hollywood's past and Hollywood's future.

A year ago, many of us did not know where those two roads met.

It took a lot of meetings, a lot of phone calls, and a lot of midnight oil to make Hollywood and vine the best project it could be.

But we did it, and I want to thank the redevelopment agency, Bob Blue, Legacy Partners and Gatehouse Capital for keeping your eyes on the prize.

Just five years ago, Hollywood and Vine meant crime, blight, and decay. In the 2000 census, families living near this project had average incomes between \$19,000 and \$23,000 a year.

Today, we're bringing 200 living-wage, union hotel jobs; 400 units of mixed-income housing; and community shopping, all right next to the Red Line.

On February 12th, I invite you to join me as we break ground on our future at Hollywood and Vine.

We still dream big in Hollywood.

The Chamber was critical in proposing one of our bigger dreams.

Time was you could buy an acre for \$1.25 in Hollywood.

Today, that acre could cost north of 8 million dollars.

So why not build land out of thin air?

It costs less, today, to create a park in the air than it does to purchase the land on the ground.

Today we look at the air above the Hollywood Freeway. We've imagined a Hollywood Central Park, a green belt uniting us where now we are separated, ranging anywhere from 24 to 35 acres, potentially larger than Pan Pacific Park.

Yes, Hollywood, we still dream big dreams.

There's no better view of what it means to dream in Hollywood than a star ceremony.

And there was none that moved me this year more than that of Hilary Swank.

This was the year she won her second Oscar. Years ago, as a new arrival in our town, Hilary slept in a car. Her mother fed dimes into the pay phone to keep prospective agents on the line.

She said that she never dreamed that she would have a star on the Walk of Fame.

Her success is part of our thrill. It's part of our advertisement to the world: see a star. Be a star. But it's not the end of our story.

All of us have dreams. Not all of us will be movie stars.

Maybe we dream that we can find a job that pays a living wage, so we can work one job, instead of two or three.

Maybe we dream that our children will go to a school near where they live, or have a park they can walk to.

Maybe we dream like some of our neighbors that we won't have to sleep in our car tonight.

Our vision must be big and bold enough to make each of these dreams come true.

I want to congratulate my colleague Tom LaBonge on the reopening of our landmark Griffith Observatory. From there, you can see the universe sparkle above us. But you can also gaze down at the beauty of our neighborhood and its people.

Our Hollywood is not about the brightest stars. It's about the entire constellation of our community, assembled in this room right here today.

Constellations are about connections, between one another, between individuals, between institutions, within a neighborhood council.

I like to walk our streets and make those connections.

This year, near Santa Monica and Normandie, I walked with Father Rodel and 100 parishioners of Immaculate Heart Church in East Hollywood.

That day, I spoke to a young man in his apartment who walks around with a bullet in his chest. Last year, he was shot, late at night, coming home from work at the wrong time on his block.

Hollywood, I ask you again:

What is our mission?

What kind of city will we inspire?

For that young man and those who still struggle, we must rebuild our city, starting in our small town.

I have seen the dreams of our small town spring forth in every corner of Hollywood these past five years.

I saw these dreams in Lemon Grove Park last year.

Lemon Grove Park is a working-class park on the south and east side of Hollywood.

A few years ago, no one much used it.

Then we found money for street lights. Planted some trees with the community. Got a security camera for the park.

It got safer. We hired a rec center director with a big heart.

One night, last year, in a safer park, in a neighborhood that no one had much thought about for a very long time, the rec director brought an outdoor nature program to lemon grove.

A few dozen local kids, who'd never been to Big Bear, or to Mammoth, or even to Catalina, slept around a campfire.

And they didn't just sleep—they dreamed.

Under the stars.

Amongst the stars.

In Hollywood.

Thank you.