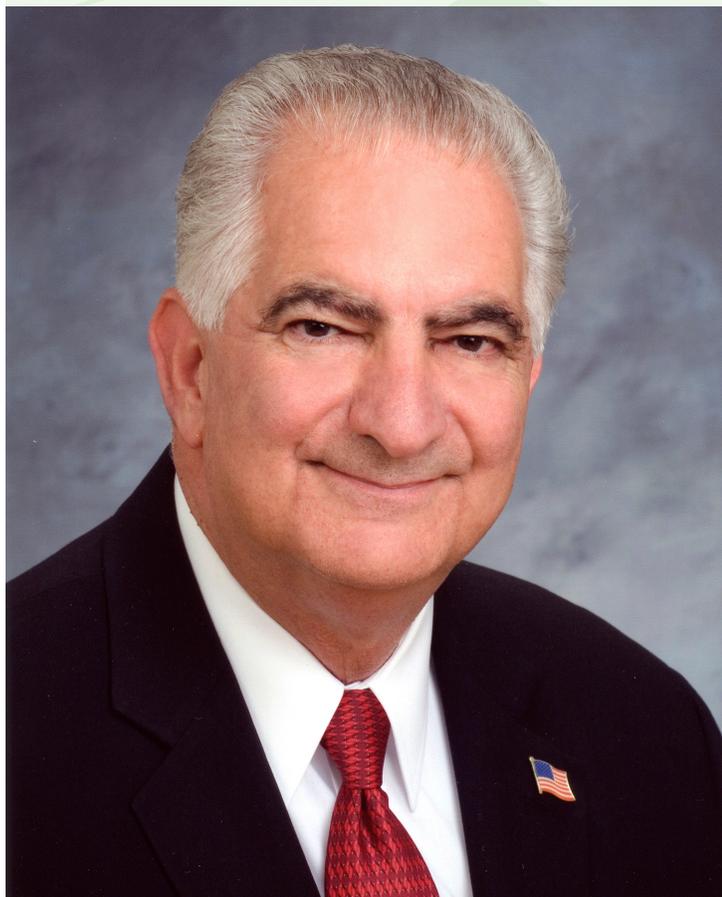




2009

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Mayor Frank Scotto

Frank Scotto was elected to his first term on the Torrance City Council in 2000 and garnered the mayoral seat in 2006. As mayor, he serves as the voting delegate to the following organizations: Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), South Bay Economic Development Partnership (SBEDP), and the Los Angeles County Sanitation District.

He is currently a board member and past president of the Lomita-Torrance Airport Rotary Club, having actively participated in this club for over 25 years.

A native Californian, born in Riverside in 1948, Frank Scotto has lived in Torrance for 50 years.

Hello! I'm Mayor Frank Scotto. I am happy to be here today to talk to you about the state of our City-----The City of Torrance. While the state and the nation have been experiencing an uncertain economic climate, perhaps you are wondering how the City of Torrance is doing. We're doing fine!

Torrance is in a good position to continue to withstand the challenges presented to us. We have numerous key assets that help us navigate the winds of economic change. Torrance IS safe. It IS secure. Because Torrance is so diverse, with a government and highly-skilled employees that are committed to keeping our businesses and local economy strong, we are a vibrant community where the quality of life continues to improve.

Today's economic challenges shed light on the importance of our business practices. It's been the "Torrance Way" to be careful managers of our resources – day in and day out. As we consider the uncertain future, we will continue to take a conservative approach with our finances. We've always been prudent with our spending, and are consistently looking for ways to be efficient as we address the needs of the community. Today, ladies and gentlemen, we can see the results of these careful and wise practices.

Although cities throughout the country are facing many challenges because of the economy, Torrance is still in good shape. Despite major revenue sources taking a toll, Torrance maintains a balanced budget for the year 2008-2009. The sales tax generated from retail and automotive sales have only declined in the third and fourth quarter.

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Natural gas and oil prices, a component of our Utility User's Tax, were also a concern for us. With a decline in petroleum costs to the consumer early in the year, the City also received a lesser than expected amount in taxes which feed into our revenues. Despite the decrease in our overall revenues this past year, and a projected 2 to 3% shortfall in the coming year, we are still able to protect the vital services, programs and activities that we offer our community.

This year, we have a new administration in Washington, which is bringing new opportunities for funding of programs through the "Troubled Asset Relief Program", or more commonly known as the "Federal Stimulus Program". While we're aware that other cities are in much more dire situations, we uphold our commitment to enhance the quality of life in Torrance by providing a variety of services and programs. We have submitted projects for consideration to Washington, and I am happy to report our successes! We have projects that will now be partially funded through the "Troubled Asset Relief Program". These include the rehabilitation of Crenshaw Boulevard, which is in design phase; and up to ten new buses for our aging transit fleet. This is going to help modernize our aging bus fleet. The new buses will not only benefit riders, but also the environment, as they will be the new generation of hybrids.

In addition to exploring external sources of funds, our current economic situation forces us to also look internally. The scrutiny we put ourselves through is not easy but it gives us the opportunity to take great strides in finding new and creative ways of managing our limited resources. This practice often leads to better solutions and more effective use of all our valuable assets.

Our own Police Department is an example. Torrance Police Chief John Neu introduced "Focus-Based Policing" to the Department. Focus-Based Policing is a distinct management philosophy based upon the need for continuous performance improvement, employee development, and a general dissatisfaction

with the status quo. Our belief and approach is simply "things can always be done better throughout the entire organization." With this philosophy at its center, the Department identified the most important issues facing our community and the police department. At the top they identified enhancing the relationship with the community and improving the way front-line police services are delivered. This honest assessment was followed by careful analysis of our current structure, and the department decided to make diligent efforts to address these issues; "Team Policing" emerged.

In January 2010, "Team Policing" will be implemented. It is the most significant change in police deployment in over 30 years. With Team Policing, there will be new geographic boundaries for patrol officers. The new patrol deployment structure with revised roles and responsibilities for personnel, the new shift schedules will match workload needs. This change will bring more patrol officers to our streets on times when they are most needed. With a new emphasis on working as more unified teams throughout the department, our officers will have more resources to help them follow each case through to its resolution.

Our assessment led to creative ways of saving money without sacrificing services we offer to the community. In any organization, a large percentage of the budget goes to salaries and benefits of those who work there. Torrance isn't any different. The Police Department identified sworn positions that could be converted to non-sworn positions. It is a step toward efficiency that saves the City money, avoids necessary cuts from other services and programs and actually enhances the department's skilled investigative capability.

In the same creative thought process, last year City staff noted that 72 percent of all emergency fire calls were requests for medical response. The growing demand for medical attention required us to assess our ability to quickly respond to those calls especially in critical moments. The need for

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a fifth paramedic unit in our Fire Department arose, and we were able to accomplish this through the redistribution of existing personnel. This was supported by everyone – City Council, management, and the Torrance Firefighters Association. The cost to us was minimal while the benefit to the community is immeasurable.

Torrance IS safe! Services to the community are protected. As reported recently, Torrance is the 4th safest city in Los Angeles County, and the 23rd safest city in the United States with populations over 100,000. Within this safe environment opportunities that enrich the lives of all who live, work and play here continue to grow.

Businesses help provide these opportunities as they provide a stream of revenue. The good news? Torrance has always had a thriving business community. The better news? It continues to do so.

Although some businesses in our community are finding it challenging in this economic environment, we continue to receive news of businesses inquiring about space here in Torrance. Torrance is *still* an ideal place for businesses.

In 2008, we saw over 900 new business licenses. This year we hope to continue that trend. In the past few months alone we've seen the opening of several new restaurants in the downtown area. Meanwhile, existing businesses are improving their facilities and services in response to the demand.

The City of Torrance's employment opportunities are another sign of our economic strength. Through the years, Torrance has consistently performed better than the County and the nation in keeping most of its residents employed. And even in these tough economic times, we continue to fare better. We have only a 5.6 percent unemployment rate, which is way below the County's 11.4%, the State's 11.2% and the Nation's 8.5% rate of unemployment in the same period. It is a sign of our resilience. It reassures us that our foundations are strong. It affirms that our efforts to assist businesses continue to succeed. It

is also a reminder of how fortunate we are to have educated and skilled members of the community who contribute in numerous ways.

Our thriving business community contributes significantly to the quality of life in Torrance. Besides being a source of revenue, the business activities, products and services bring vitality to our community. As Mayor and a business-owner myself, I know that this past year has been challenging for businesses. So, this past year the City of Torrance provided businesses with programs and activities to encourage, support, and assist them.

In 2008, the Office of Economic Development hosted the second annual "Torrance Advantage Awards" to recognize businesses for their innovative economic development strategies. It was also our way to say "thank you". We know the award, the promotional opportunities, and the letters of recognition may only be a small token of appreciation, but I sincerely hope all Torrance businesses – large and small – take advantage of the opportunities we are able to provide. It is my pleasure to say – "THANK YOU"!

Besides the Torrance Advantage Awards, the City has been working on a few projects to assist existing businesses and to draw more visitors to the City. To attract businesses to our city the City Council has just authorized the construction contract for the One-Stop Permit Center and construction is expected to start this summer. Upon its completion, the City of Torrance will have a premier customer service center where permit issuance needs can be handled at one location.

As I mentioned last year, a group of individuals has been working on "Discover Torrance". It is our hope to better market the numerous assets we have to others in the world, and to our own community members. This project has been steadily progressing. The team, composed of representatives from our hospitality industry and the city, is exploring the creation of a Tourism Business Improvement District. The team is still in the process of reaching

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out to other businesses, specifically hotels, for their input.

Marketing our City is an incredible undertaking that needs the cooperation and participation of many. With all that we have to offer, I think it is time we share with everyone the “Torrance Advantage.” So I hope I can count on each of you to help in any way you’re able in our effort to share with the rest of the world the kind of city Torrance is – A PREMIER ONE! A GREAT ONE!

Torrance has also joined the Recycling Market Development Zone program available through the Integrated Waste Management Board. Our participation will give Torrance access to business loans and other economic stimulus options to assist businesses that use recycled materials in their operation. We’ve also been working with business leaders in downtown Torrance in efforts to revitalize the area. We’re exploring the idea of creating an artists’ co-op that will benefit Torrance economically and culturally.

Our 46 parks and recreational facilities host up to 900 programs that are attended by over forty thousand people each year. There are sporting events, clubs at various parks, and artistic opportunities. Some of the activities include programs at the Torrance Art Museum, at the James Armstrong Theater, and many special events such as our Fourth of July Celebration, The Aquacade, and the Armed Forces Day Celebration. In addition, we have great reading clubs at the libraries; all of these opportunities help nurture a more positive and safe environment, maintaining Torrance’s reputation as a city with that “hometown feel”.

The economy may have slowed down, but to us, this only means the City of Torrance works harder to protect vital services and to ensure a steady stream of offerings to the community. It means opportunity. It means we work harder to

assist each one of you in your lives, your businesses, and your endeavors.

One of the major concerns we have in Torrance is traffic. It is accompanied by our concern for an aging infrastructure that supports the daily movement of vehicles in and out of our town. These issues, along with others, continue to be strategically addressed.

The citywide traffic study has been completed. It will provide critical information in our plans to help alleviate traffic. The study has provided enlightening information to help focus certain elements of our strategic plan update and our general plan. Recently we have approved funding to create a Traffic Management Center, a project with Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. The Traffic Management Center will allow City staff to constantly monitor traffic conditions. From there, we can easily dispatch information to our field crews, and provide a quick response to help modify or resolve any traffic issues.

Infrastructure? Anyone who’s driven down Torrance Boulevard lately can attest to the improvements we’ve consistently been able to perform in the past year. The rehabilitation of our main thoroughfares such as Torrance Boulevard and 190th Street is just an example. In 2008, we repaired 6.8 miles of streets, 2.4 miles of sidewalks, 16,000 potholes and sealed 40 miles of cracks. We also installed 170 new curb ramps, which are compliant with the American with Disabilities Act, and we are now in the process of installing 850 more. Crenshaw Boulevard’s improvement is in the design phase, and we’re working on extending Del Amo Boulevard between Maple Avenue and Crenshaw Boulevard.

We have also replaced our water mains and are repairing our wells and reservoirs to conserve our water use.

Now, if you’ve been in the library lately, you will have witnessed the results of our recent remodel to ensure that our library is ready to withstand an earthquake. And, because of this remodeling it also looks great! We also renovated the Library Meeting Room, which can now be used as a new meeting space. It reopened

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this January and this project is now being followed by the improvements of all the other branch libraries. The Southeast Torrance Branch has just been reopened after a complete makeover. Work has begun now on the El Retiro Library and others will follow.

I am proud of the many services we have. I hope you too are proud of the way Torrance continues to meet the needs of the residents! You and your families have a steady stream of resources you can rely upon. These days, it doesn't get easy. Providing the services we offer is getting more difficult amidst these economic times, but I am certain that through hard work, creative use of resources, smart management and conservation, including our natural ones, the City of Torrance will always be the great city that it already is.

Winston Churchill once said, "Responsibility comes with greatness." And with greatness often comes numerous challenges. My colleagues on the Torrance City Council and I have appointed a panel of community members. They will volunteer their time and energy to create an ethics plan. They will be the "Ethics & Integrity Committee" that will explore ethical guidelines that we – City Council, management and every single employee – will abide by as we serve each of you. Just as a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, a City is only as great as its most conscientious employee. Transparency in government is one of the cornerstones of this administration. So last year we added a voting system within our Council Chambers to show how each member votes. This year our efforts toward transparency through the use of technology have earned us recognition. The City received top honors by ranking fifth for achieving the most total web casts archived online. With this significant volume of programs available online, we are positioned in the top ten of a national media ranking that tracks this information from over 500 government agencies.

As a great City, we accept our responsibility for all we affect in our operations. This includes our declining natural resources. So, since signing the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement, we have been taking steps to protect our natural resources. Our green waste recycling program will double this summer and we hope to be

citywide by this time next year. The City is in an ongoing program to purchase alternative fuel vehicles that are environmentally friendly and will consume less fuel.

We also developed an internal Green Torrance Action team that's exploring ways to encourage residents and businesses to "go green". A key partnership with the Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce helped us develop "greentorrance.com," as a resource. Together, the City and the Chamber, along with the office of Congresswoman Jane Harman, are planning an inaugural environmental fair on June 12 and 13. I hope you can all come and participate.

Conserving our resources is our way of giving back what we borrow from our future. As the Native American proverb says, "...it is from them that we borrow the earth, we don't inherit it from our ancestors." In the same way we should try to make sure that our future generation has land and a community with strong leadership. We are fortunate to have the Torrance Unified School District that helps us with this by providing quality education to our children.

Torrance has always been known for its quality education. It's one of the main reasons people move to our community. I encourage each one of you to help our school system maintain its prominence, its ability to educate our kids, hone their skills and shape their characters. The City continues its mutually-beneficial partnership with the school district. The City is proud to support our schools. As part of our budget we support our school district in the amount of over 2 million dollars annually. This is nothing new! We have done this for many years because we recognize the importance of helping our schools. Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce has its Adopt-a-School program. Many of the local business contribute time and resources to our schools through this program. I challenge each and every resident to find one way to help our schools!

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We live in uncertain times and face an uncertain future; however, we see this as an opportunity. I know that the fabric of our diverse community and the commitment we have to each member will prevail. All who make up our community - the people, the businesses, and the organizations provide key partnerships for our success.

Together they will see us through into a brighter future! I assure you, as Mayor of the City of Torrance, the City will do its part to be stewards of the resources we have. We will continue to be prudent managers over these resources so we can address the needs of our growing community. As Margaret Meade once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Now, I also challenge each one of you to join us in finding creative ways to help one another! Now more than ever, I say we cannot do it alone.

I thank my colleagues on the City Council, City staff, and all who have contributed to this past year as we continue to grasp this new opportunity for success. I want to thank all of you who are watching, and with your help, I look forward to a brighter and more prosperous future for Torrance.