



**STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS
The Honorable Manuel Lozano, Mayor
March 30, 2007**

On behalf of the City Council and city staff, good morning and thank you very much for coming out on this beautiful California day to hear about the state of our great city, Baldwin Park.

Before I start, I would like to acknowledge my colleagues on the City Council who diligently strive to make Baldwin Park a great place to work, live and play.

Behind our City Council, I would like to recognize members of our Executive Team led by Vijay Singhal, our Chief Executive Officer, who everyday lends their expertise and guidance to our City Departments. At this time, I would like to introduce the City's Executive Team— Manny Carrillo, Chief Ed Lopez, William Galvez, and Hennie Apodaca. Last but not least, I would like to thank all our employees for their dedication and hard work to our City.

We especially wish to thank the staff of the Baldwin Park Adult School for allowing us to use their space. Let's show them our appreciation (*start applause*).

I recently saw a tip about speechmaking that went something like:

"To give a good speech, have a strong beginning and

a strong ending ... and put them as close together as possible.”

That’s my *plan* this morning, but the person who wrote that tip obviously didn’t have as much good news to report as I do!

Today, I want to tell you about our fiscal year in progress, which in turn, I think, will give you a great feeling about the year ahead. The state of our city is ***good*** and getting ***better***. Cesar Chavez, whose 80th birthday would have been tomorrow, used to say, “The answer lies with you and me.” Like Señor Chavez, you and I believe in achieving the very best in our community. We want each of us to have a city that is a pleasure to live and participate; a city that is clean, healthy and safe; and a city that is growing both economically and culturally.

Economic strength will always be a priority in Baldwin Park because it gives people the **independence** and **dignity** of working and living in a place with a bright future. We know intuitively that the drivers of economic growth **are**:

- 1) an affordable cost of living,
- 2) an improving quality of life,
- 3) an open and friendly social and regulatory environment for newcomers, **and**
- 4) well-supported educational institutions that are accessible to all.

First, no public address in California is considered complete without a discussion of **freeways**.

We have been very busy trying to get funding back from the California Transportation Commission and approval from the Metropolitan Transit Authority to begin the long-overdue improvements needed on the 10 Freeway. I'm sure you know how congested and dangerous it is where it transitions to the 605. Nearly 450,000 cars use that interchange every day. When it becomes impassible — — traffic exits the freeway and fills our surface streets. You also know that the state mysteriously omitted \$70 million in upgrades, even though there was strong voter backing for it under Proposition 1-B transportation measure.

I'm excited and proud to report — after combined endeavors of many people by lobbying, holding a press conference, and a trip to the state capital by all five members of the City Council to meet with the Transportation Commission — we received word February 27, that the project finally had the green light — green for funding and green for “go.”

This milestone was a joint effort to have the backing of other elected officials like Assemblymember Ed Hernandez, Assemblymember Bob Huff, L.A. County Supervisor Gloria Molina, State Senator Gloria Romero and U.S. Congresswoman Hilda Solis. We owe them our gratitude for their help in getting the freeway project back on the map.

In addition, the unprecedented collaboration among the San Gabriel Valley cities of South El Monte, El Monte, Baldwin Park, La Puente, Azusa and West Covina, showed that the project is what the voters want. Ricardo Pacheco, our colleague on the City Council, was quoted in the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune* and its sister newspaper, the *Pasadena Star-News*, on how valuable it had

been to have so much participation. He credited Assemblymember Hernandez with, Quote:

“bringing the issue to the front of the line and getting everybody behind it.”

Construction will now move forward, we hope in 2009.

Another anticipated freeway project has received funding, a carpool-lane extension along the 10 Freeway. The MTA has approved \$356.5 million dollars for extending the carpool lane from the 10/605 interchange to the 57 Orange Freeway, beginning in August of 2010. This project had been scrapped from the state’s Proposition 1B funding list, despite being supported by both Caltrans and the MTA. The *Tribune* and *Star-News* quoted Mayor Pro Tem Marlen Garcia about Quote:

“What a rollercoaster ride the campaign for transportation funding has been. She pointed out in the article that working on two projects simultaneously will cut down on costs, time and commuter inconvenience during construction. “

Another of our City Council colleagues who worked so hard on this group effort, David Olivas, was also quoted in the *Tribune*. He was remarking on how pleasantly surprised he was to see the approval happen so quickly. He was able to enlist the support of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, of which he is the secretary.

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I have more important news for you this morning.

For a long time, the City Council and Community Development Commission have envisioned to transform the downtown area into a compelling mixed-

use, pedestrian-friendly urban village. The project will span approximately 125 acres within the Central Business District and Sierra Vista Redevelopment Project Area and will capitalize on the convenience of the Metrolink Station, and thee many amenities nearby. A beautiful downtown will attract new businesses, which will create job opportunities. The added tax revenues will fund community services and programs. Overall, our new downtown will reinforce Baldwin Park as a destination of choice that offers a unique environment in which to live, work and play.

Obviously, such a project is a huge undertaking but before even a tablespoon of dirt is turned, we anticipate two years of planning, community input and diligent prep work by a developer with expertise and experience in creating a community urban center. We have signed an exclusive agreement with Bisno Development Company, a company that has created 40 beautiful centers in various communities.

One of their first assignments is to solicit input from business owners and members of the public. The Community Development Commission and Bisno Development will work together to meet with the public to understand its expectations. We expect the first phase of the project to take about 5 years before the first occupant moves in.

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A major component of our commitment to public safety is the Baldwin Park Police Department, a team of dedicated professionals who bring years of experience and work hard to ensure safe neighborhoods and secure business areas.

With that great mix of experience and commitment, our police have had impressive results. In 2006, the officers responded to more than 45,000 calls for service—or about 124 calls a day. They reduced the most serious crimes by 6% and traffic accidents by 14%. The department’s Special Investigations Unit took 30 firearms, nearly half a ton of illegal drugs and \$4million dollars in drug money out of circulation.

As the city grows, another priority for the police department is the safe management of both vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

To help reduce accidents and dangerous driving, some of our intersections now have red-light cameras. Since the program began last June, the photo enforcement effort has resulted in nearly 11,000 traffic tickets, or about 1,200 a month. Above all, we hope it is helping to correct some potentially lethal driving habits and to prevent accidents.

We are asking the support of property owners on another aspect of vehicle and pedestrian safety, the Landscaping and Lighting Maintenance District assessment increase. The “LLMD”, as it’s called, pays for street lighting, traffic signals and the landscaping of median islands. The costs of energy, water, materials and labor for these items have significantly increased over the last 10 years, while our population has grown. We need to install more traffic signals and flashing crosswalks for the safety of our drivers and pedestrians. For that to happen there needs to be an increase in the assessment. If you are a property owner in Baldwin Park, you will be receiving a ballot in the mail the week of April 16. We, the City Council and other elected officials fully support

LLMD and I hope all property owners sitting here today, vote in favor of this important measure.

Our police have earned state and national attention for their work. For example, the California Office of Traffic Safety awarded them more than \$900,000 in grants. About half of the funds went to helping the department lead a multi-agency task force against intoxicated drivers, using DUI checkpoints and saturation patrols.

The other half is for the enforcement of seatbelt laws, apprehension of unlicensed drivers, collision reduction and bicycle safety programs.

In keeping with the city's philosophy of "public safety first," especially, matters concerning the welfare of our children, the City Council passed an emergency ordinance related to registered sex offenders and their proximity to children's facilities. It is even more comprehensive and stronger than the current state law.

Lowering crime rates is complex. The solution is part economic, part social. It must involve everyone — not only law enforcement, but also parents, schools, government, neighborhood groups, civic organizations, the faith community and all of us. If, we work together, we can do it. As Cesar Chavez used to say — “¡Sí se puede!” or “Yes, we can!”

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A great example of that can-do spirit is our award-winning Recreation & Community Services Department. Thanks to their efforts, the California Parks & Recreation Society has honored the city with two of its prestigious statewide Awards of Excellence. Our comprehensive 50th Anniversary

Celebration promotion last year won Best Marketing Campaign for its use of a variety of techniques to spotlight the anniversary of Baldwin Park's incorporation.

The second Award of Excellence was for the 2006 Summer Concerts in the Park logo. The Recreation & Community Services department commissioned an art piece from artist Jerry Clovis. It was called "Rhythm of Summer" and featured vivid contrasting colors and several musical instruments. The original artwork will be on permanent display at the Arts & Recreation Center, along with the 2005 concert logo titled "Celebrating Music and Fun" by Sonya Paz, which also won the 2005 Award of Excellence.

Some of our staff members traveled to the annual conference in Sacramento to accept the awards for the City and showcase the winning projects.

Speaking of awards, Home Depot has just awarded the Department of Recreation and Community Services, a grant for a new playground at Walnut Creek Nature Park. With the help of community volunteers, Home Depot will install the playground on May 17. We would like to thank Home Depot for their commitment to the city. On April 14, we will be hosting a free concert to raise awareness on parks featuring the band, "Cold Duck".

We have already begun signing up world-famous artists for our 2007 Concerts in the Park series. So far, we have Grammy-Award winner Poncho Sanchez performing August 9 and Mariachi Sol de México de Jose Hernandez performing July 26, the same evening as our annual "Taste of Baldwin Park". This year, in order to accommodate more cars, we have made arrangements to let cars park on the Morgan Park athletic field.

Our new Arts & Recreation Center is nearly **ready**. We expect to unveil it this coming June. The new fifteen thousand square-foot center features a banquet hall, fine arts studio, and exhibit space. Also, the Baldwin Park Historical Society, will have its museum in the new center and continue to provide tours.

[Ailene Pinheiro}

This building will be the jewel of the San Gabriel Valley and will attract thousands of people looking to enhance their knowledge of the Arts or to celebrate special events like anniversaries, small wedding receptions, or quinceañeras.

In support of arts and culture in Baldwin Park, we have embarked on a capital campaign for the Arts & Recreation Center. The campaign enables businesses and corporations to sponsor individual rooms in the facility. A prominent plaque identifying the sponsor will adorn the entrance to each sponsored room. Individuals who donate to the facility will have their names inscribed on the permanent donor wall, which will be located inside the Center.

I am pleased to announce **85%** of the rooms have been **sponsored**, and a number of other opportunities for individual sponsorships still exist. I hope you or your company support our movement to make art and culture **thrive** in Baldwin Park. If interested , please contact the Recreation and Community Services Department. If you want to sponsor today, we will have sponsorship forms available this morning for those of you who would like to get involved in this special campaign.

Also expected in June, is the expansion of the Julia McNeill Senior Center. It will have an extra 3,500 square feet of meeting and recreation space, with a

new lounge area, as well as a renovated patio area and assembly hall. The expansion will benefit senior activities and bring new programs and classes to the entire community. Just last week, the City Council unanimously approved an extra \$100,000 dollars for the Senior Center construction, simply because we feel that our seniors are the best and *deserve the best.* (*initiate applause*)

Some special congratulations are in order. I know it's not proper to reveal a woman's age, but not a women's *club's* age . This fiscal year, the Baldwin Park Women's Club celebrated its 100th birthday. The club has been a true force for social change in our city. Since 1906, they have provided a variety of services, from holiday toy donations to student scholarships to environmental programs. Congratulations and thank you to current president, Margaret Solenson and the entire Baldwin Park Women's Club. (*initiate applause*)

The health of Baldwin Park residents plays a huge role in the quality of life and is one of our most important concerns. We want to make the City as healthy as it can be.

One item having a direct, positive effect on the city's health is our No Smoking Ordinance, which had covered all parks and city-owned buildings. *In January*, the City Council expanded the smoking ban to include outdoor dining areas, bus stops, ATM lines, the Metrolink Station, near open doorways and windows, and anywhere the public might congregate on public property. Baldwin Park is the first city in the San Gabriel Valley to have such a comprehensive policy.

Everyone can help make the smoking ban work. Did you see the movie? "*Pay It Forward*"? It came out in 2000 and featured Kevin Spacey and Helen Hunt. The premise of the movie was that it is possible to save the world, one small favor at a time. Each person who receives a favor does one for someone else,

who in turn performs one for someone else. We're asking businesses whose customers gather in outdoor areas, such as restaurants, to "pay it forward" by advising customers of the ban. And I call on individuals, who patronize our businesses to not light up and tell smokers you know about the ban. The Recreation Department will be helping through an informational campaign and pamphlets in English and Spanish that will be handed out at the door as you leave this morning.

Thanks to media coverage of our smoking ban, which took effect on March 9, other municipalities and nonprofit organizations from around the country have contacted us. It's very nice to be famous for having a healthy city! In fact, our colleague Councilman Anthony Bejarano pointed out when he was interviewed by the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune* that it is always great to be recognized for taking the lead on issues that might not be too popular but are beneficial to the community. People everywhere enjoy clean air.

{CHANGE OF TONE}

We are working with People on the Move to give Baldwin Park resident's a variety of healthy choices when they go out to eat at one of the City's fine restaurants. We're developing a program for educating restaurants and grocery stores about trans fats, which studies have linked to increased risk of coronary heart disease and obesity. Our goal is to ban trans fats throughout the entire city, similar to the New York City ordinance. Unfortunately, we cannot enforce such an ordinance until the State of California passes legislation.

PAUSE

In the meantime, we plan to send information about cooking without trans fat and ask our restaurants to support the health of our community by voluntarily joining this effort. It might even give them a marketing advantage to promote non-trans fat items on their menus and encourage people to dine out more often.

Last April, we took the concept of open, participatory government to a new level with the launching of the City's new interactive **website** at www.baldwinpark.com. It features audio webcasts of City Council meetings, the city's adopted budget, event information and general contact information for all city departments.

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Last fiscal year, Baldwin Park was the first city in the San Gabriel Valley to have an approved balanced budget, thanks to the expertise of our **Finance Department**, which has been very busy this fiscal year. It's amazing to me, all the details and data this department has to keep track of and the massive number of reports. Yet, they manage to stay completely on top of things and help all other departments with financial planning and reporting. They have completed their year-end reporting to government agencies.

In 2006, the department mobilized the Business License Enforcement program to capture revenues from businesses operating without valid licenses. This enabled us to increase the number of officially licensed businesses in the city and to raise the license fees to a level appropriate with those in surrounding cities, which brought in an extra \$100,000 in fee revenue.

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I would like to express the city's gratitude to our generous sponsors who made today's event possible:

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Laidlaw's Harley - Davidson Sales, Inc.

The Michael Touhey Co.

Royal Coaches Auto Body & Towing

West Coast Arborists, Inc.

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In closing, let us remember Cesar Chavez again. He was a man who had only an eighth-grade education. He married and settled in an East San Jose barrio called, "**Sal Si Puedes**," which means "get out if you can." He and his wife had eight children, yet Señor Chavez **never** earned more than **\$6,000** dollars a year and never owned a house. Yet, what an impact this American hero has **contributed!**

We each know of some things here in Baldwin Park that need attention — I encourage you to help us get them done. I call on everyone here this morning to be a part of this great city. Take care of yourselves and each other, and together, let's make Baldwin Park even better. Thank you very much.