

## Garcetti Upbeat on the State of Hollywood

By ANNA SCOTT

**Parking is 'highest priority' says council president, following annual speech in which he cites accomplishments and urges fight against homelessness.**

Los Angeles City Council President Eric Garcetti delivered this year's State of Hollywood Address last week, in an upbeat speech that in many ways painted Hollywood as a model for greater Los Angeles.

Before an audience of more than 300 people representing local businesses and community groups at the historic Roosevelt hotel, Garcetti kicked things off with a brief history lesson on Hollywood's first settlers before citing statistics on the area's recent progress in curbing crime and unemployment.

"Here, we have shown what a pro-business environment can do," he said, setting the tone for the rest of the speech.

"Our public-private partnerships are a model for our city," Garcetti said, going on to tick off a dizzying list of 2006 accomplishments including the Community Redevelopment Agency's take of \$642 million in public dollars and \$3.3 billion in private investment, Kaiser and Children's hospitals' investments in new Hollywood buildings, the construction of the first high school built in the neighborhood in 80 years and the Nielsen Company's move to Hollywood.

The council president also revisited the much-lauded agreement he helped strike between longtime Hollywood and Vine luggage store owner Bob Blue and the developers of a W Hotel complex slated for the same location, which will allow for Blue's store to be built into the new development.

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

Congratulations were also in order, as Garcetti acknowledged his council colleague Tom LaBonge's role in reopening the Griffith Park Observatory, and recalled the recent ceremony for Oscar-winner Hilary Swank's addition to the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Garcetti concluded his speech on a wistful note by recounting the progress made this year in Lemon Grove Park, "a working-class park on the south and east side of Hollywood."

"A few years ago, no one much used it," Garcetti said. "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 ... slept around a campfire."

Overall, the optimistic speech largely avoided some of the issues Garcetti broached in last year's State of Hollywood Address, such as housing, traffic and pollution.

"The central moral challenge of our city ... is in the 88,000 men, women and children who sleep on the streets of Los Angeles County every night," Garcetti said in his 2006 address. "Hollywood can lead this city in solving the housing crisis."

This year's markedly more lighthearted approach continued into the question-and-answer period, when one query about the area's best eateries prompted Garcetti to offer his thoughts on where to get the best burger in town.

But the question-and-answer session also gave attendees the opportunity to probe a bit deeper into a few city issues, such as parking.

"We don't have a parking problem. We have a parking management problem," Garcetti said, before suggesting that the installation of Grove-style technology to inform drivers of open spaces in parking structures might be a wise future addition to Hollywood's lots.

"It is the highest priority for me," the councilman said.