



# CITY OF STOCKTON

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## 2024 STOCKTON STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

### [OPENING]

I have had the distinct honor and privilege of serving the city of Stockton as your Mayor. We have stood firm on the vision for our city, that ***Stockton will become the best city in America to live, raise a family, and grow a business.*** Over the past 3 years, this vision has guided every decision we've made, every partnership we've formed, and every dollar we've invested.

Stockton is the place we are proud to call home. We are a city of hard workers, educators, business owners, and multi-generational families. We are **THE** most diverse city in the nation, representing dozens of ethnic backgrounds, languages, and cultures. Stockton is where **our** people are, and Stocktonians are built differently.

Stocktonians **show up, stand up, and speak up** for the city they love. Our residents channel the power of their voices. We are breaking down walls of division and building bridges of trust throughout this community, giving new meaning to the words "public, private, and non-profit partnerships."

We are growing, we are building, and we are **OneStockton**.

If you are in this room and serve in a non-profit organization, are an educator, a faith leader, a small business owner, or a public servant working in our community, I'd like you to please stand up.

I want to be clear...the progress our City has made is the direct result of incredible partnerships working with one common goal: improving **the quality of life for all Stockton residents.**

### [HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING]

Addressing the homeless and housing needs in Stockton involves individuals and families moving from life on the streets to housing, employment, and healing from addictions.

When we cut a ribbon, we aren't just celebrating a construction accomplishment but an opportunity for a new life and a new beginning. Our investments in housing and services for the homeless are about **healing trauma and ending generational poverty in our city.**

### ***Tell a Story:***

I'm reminded of a gentleman by the name of Frank Rayfield.

Frank grew up in a broken home, splitting his childhood between households. Like many of us, he carried disappointment, anger, and frustration around as a child, struggling to deal with the pains in his life. The shift for Frank took place when, at 12 years old, his father offered him his first line of cocaine as an energy boost to finish his chores. That single moment began a lifelong journey of drug addiction, aggression, and crime. Frank spent 20 of his 44 years of life in prison.

Upon discharge from prison, Frank was at an incredible low, still addicted to drugs and feeling unwanted and unloved. Ending up in a hotel room with a pistol in his hand, Frank was planning to end his life. He made the decision to call his sister, and by the grace of God, she showed up to save him. She took him to the Gospel Center Rescue Mission, where Frank began his journey toward recovery.

During his time at the mission, Frank overcame his addiction, was baptized, and graduated from the New Life Program. Frank has been the maintenance engineer at Inertia Engineering for the past three years.

He owns a car, has insurance, and can pay all his bills. Frank tells his friends and coworkers, "The Mission introduced me to God. They taught me to believe in myself and gave me lessons on how to live a new life in Christ and to love myself. God replaced my love for drugs with a love for people."

In the past year, **85 people** graduated from the New Life program at Gospel Center Rescue Mission, leaving a life of homelessness, addiction, and bondage to a life of freedom and opportunity.

Graduates are not just receiving shelter but are gaining employment, education, and workforce development opportunities.

**Together, we are bringing hope and healing to our city.**

Over the past four years, we have significantly invested in expanding Stockton's homeless shelters, housing, and services. We have built **10 emergency shelter**

projects, **9 permanent supportive housing** projects, and **4 affordable housing** projects. At the completion of these projects, we will have added **738 shelter beds and 862 housing units** for individuals and families.

In the past year, we broke ground on the brand-new Pathways campus project and began construction on our first Homeless Navigation Center, together totaling 588 units of homeless housing with wrap-around services coming available this year.

Last year, we issued **610 building permits** and **53 low-income accessory dwelling units**, and we opened Sonora Square, providing **37 behavioral health housing units** for homeless individuals and families.

Our homeless outreach teams spend valuable time throughout our community providing resources for our residents.

Our Mobile Crisis Response Program, through our partnership with Community Medical Centers in Stockton, served **over 6,000 people** experiencing a behavioral health crisis this past year.

Reducing homelessness in Stockton is about **taking actionable steps to address the root cause and improving the quality of life for all Stocktonians.**

## **[PUBLIC SAFETY]**

We have not wavered in our focus to decrease crime throughout our City. In 2023, we saw a **1.2% decrease** in violent crimes, an **8% decrease** in homicides, and removed **963 firearms** from the streets.

We are committed to ensuring our public safety departments have the tools and resources necessary to protect and serve our community. We've invested over **\$12 million** into recruitment and retention efforts by restructuring the Measure A sales tax to better serve our SPD officers and community for the next 10 years.

**Let me be clear. A culture of lawlessness in Stockton will not be tolerated.**

In 2023, Stockton PD conducted **11 multi-agency** street sideshow missions, including **1,214 traffic stops**, **83 arrests**, and **116 towed** vehicles.

With the rise in retail theft throughout our state, I have joined leaders throughout our city and county to actively advocate for amendments to Proposition 47 to ensure our retailers, business owners, and residents are no longer victims of retail crimes.

Our Stockton Fire Department is second to none. Last year our department received **51,638 calls for service**. In 2023, we reopened Fire Station 1, and we are officially

restoring services and reopening Fire Station 7, the last Fire Station closed due to bankruptcy. In addition, we launched **6 brand new fire trucks** into service, providing our firefighters with the equipment they need to save lives.

We take a 2-pronged approach to violence intervention and prevention in Stockton.

1. Enforcing the laws and holding those accountable for breaking the law;
2. Addressing the social determinants of health.

Our Office of Violence Prevention intentionally and strategically works with community partners to reduce gun and gang violence in Stockton using a Ceasefire and Peacekeeper model of operation.

These strategies focus on reaching youth and young adults who are at the highest risk of gang involvement and serious gun-related violence.

These are our most dangerous offenders and, oftentimes, victims. These partner-based violence reduction strategies include violence intervention, mentorship, educational training, and providing positive alternatives for a healthier, non-violent lifestyle.

### ***Tell a Story:***

There's a story of a young man who was once tangled in the web of violence and incarceration and now stands as a beacon of hope within our city. Despite facing gunfire and imprisonment in his youth, he dared to dream of a better life. Through strategic life planning and an unwavering determination, he has surpassed every obstacle that has come his way.

As he worked with our Office of Violence Prevention, he embraced cognitive behavioral training, earned his high school diploma, and secured a driver's license.

Today, he inspires others as a mentor with AmeriCorps California Justice Leaders and collaborates with peacekeepers at City Hall. His transformation is a testament to the power of resilience and redemption.

Let his story remind us that our past doesn't dictate our future. **We can all forge a path of peace and service, transforming our communities one life at a time.**

### **[COMMUNITY WELL-BEING]**

Every Stockton resident values the well-being of our community and access to family-friendly activities. We work hard every day to ensure that businesses, families, and community-based organizations can thrive in our city.

1 in 20 jobs are generated through non-profit organizations, and over 2,000 non-profit organizations serve the greatest needs of our city and county, often with minimal funding and operating on volunteer staff.

We are doing our part to empower our non-profits through Stockton's Non-Profit Capacity Building program. To date, **37 local non-profits** have participated in the program, gaining expert knowledge on grant writing, team building, and creating a business plan. Through this program we are giving our non-profit organizations the support they need to be self-sustaining in service to our city.

### ***Tell a Story:***

Before participation in the NCBP program, Unbound Stockton was a fairly new educational nonprofit run by volunteer staff and volunteer board members. The Nonprofit Capacity Building Program helped the team strengthen its operations and commitment to long-term sustainability.

After completing the program, they enhanced their financial plan, grew their support base, and Unbound Stockton Community School was officially approved as the newest charter school in our County. They expect to employ 12 full-time staff members by the opening of the school.

Another participant in the NCBP program is Concrete Development.

The CEO of Concrete Development, Toni McNeil, shared, "If not for the NCBP, our nonprofit would not be where it is today. Our passion was not enough. We learned about infrastructure systems, budgeting, knowledge of board development, revenue, writing grants, and reporting. Today, we are fully dedicated to our mission and vision due to the knowledge we gained and support from the NCBP."

Since graduating from the program, Toni and her second in command, Elizabeth Ng, left their full-time jobs at another agency to pursue the expansion of their nonprofit exclusively. They now have dedicated office space, programming, full-time benefits, and insurance.

### **Stockton is strategically investing in the development of our City.**

In 2023, we secured sponsorship and naming rights for Stockton's **Adventist Health Arena** and made major digital upgrades, changing the game for event opportunities here in Stockton.

**Stockton Flavor Fest** returned with record-high attendance and won international awards for innovation and creativity.

One of the most exciting family entertainment additions last year was the brand-new **Stockton Lantern Festival**, which welcomed thousands of visitors.

And, for two years in a row, our Stockton Kings have continued to light the beam in the **NBA G-League playoffs**.

**Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and our commitment to economic development is unmatched.**

In 2023, our city provided **\$508k in entrepreneurship grants, issued 3,574 new business licenses, established a Food Truck Parks ordinance, and removed restrictions for big box retail development** in our city.

Through our downtown business façade program, we have completed **39 storefront upgrades** for small businesses in Stockton.

We've completed **18 Clean City initiative** events, removing **3,780 tons (which is 7.5 million pounds!) of trash** and debris from our streets, providing free recycling events for Stockton residents, and replaced and repaired playground equipment at **12 parks**.

## **[YOUTH PROGRAMMING AND DEVELOPMENT]**

The decisions we make, and the dollars we spend are done so with our youth in mind.

In 2023, we made historic investments in the physical, mental, and recreational well-being of our youth. This past year, the City of Stockton invested over \$6 million in youth services, programming, and workforce development.

**14 local non-profits** launched and expanded youth programs to serve our young people across the city. In addition, **284 youth and young adults** were hired to work in our first-ever City of Stockton Youth Jobs Program.

This year, we have already hired workers for our Youth Employment Summer Success program, and through the Big City Mayors Coalition I have secured ongoing annual state funding for these programs to continue moving forward in Stockton!

### ***Tell a Story:***

Under the umbrella of the San Joaquin County Office of Education, Greater Valley Conservation Corps (GVCC) is one of our 4 partners that help youth 18 to 26 years old with academic instruction, employment opportunities, green job training, and overall life skills.

These young people are at a fork in the road, often looking for opportunities to make a change, to better themselves, or unsure of what path to take next.

GVCC's is making a positive impact in the hearts and lives of our youth and young adults:

- **Brent Holloway**

- Brent started off as a Corpsmember with GVCC, gaining various work skills and completing several certification trainings. 10 months into his job as a corpsmember, he was promoted to a Crew Lead position.
- When GVCC started working with CA State Parks, Brent led the crew on trail maintenance and habitat restoration.
- Brent has since been hired on with CA State Parks, where he is working his way towards his goal of becoming a Park Ranger.

- **Carlos Nadal**

- Carlos met GVCC staff while enrolling to complete his High School diploma with SJCOE's Comeback Kids.
- Carlos works on a special projects team at GVCC, which allows him experience with specialized equipment. Most recently, Carlos has been seen operating a bobcat, ditch witch, and chainsaw, all of which are incredibly valuable work skills.
- Carlos has now been with GVCC for 8 months and graduated with his H.S. Diploma in December of 2023
- Carlos can use the education and the skills he's gained at GVCC in a career in the Landscape and Heavy Equipment industry.

### **[Closing]**

Any narrative that life is doom and gloom in Stockton is simply **NOT TRUE**, and we refuse to accept it.

Together, we are making life-changing progress throughout our city.

We are stronger, smarter, and more attractive to outside investment through collaboration and innovation.

We are making meaningful progress in reducing crime and homelessness, and businesses are growing in Stockton!

The path forward is simple: unity, consistency, and execution.

We must build upon our city's firm foundation and passionately pursue progress to improve the quality of life for all Stocktonians.

Everyone single one of us has a role to play in the success of our city.

Your voice, your work, your desires, and your partnerships are essential to our continued success.

Stockton is someplace special, and Stocktonians are built differently.

As your Mayor, I am proud of the work we have accomplished together and have immense hope for the future.

**We are growing, we are building, and we are OneStockton.**

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