The state of Santa Maria is on a healthy and strong trajectory with a building boom underway. Our City Council is exercising its political will to approve a lot of development, and our overall City organization of 10 departments continues to deliver many services to the growing community. That is a summation of the State of the City address given by Mayor Alice Patino and myself a few weeks ago.

The annual presentation is entirely generated by my office, is hosted by the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce, and provides the community with an informational update on how the City has performed over the past year, while also looking ahead into the future. About 170 people attended the event held at the Santa Maria Radisson Hotel.

Much of the presentation focused on building, both residential and commercial. Development is a big issue affecting everyone in Santa Maria. While we are officially close to 110,000 residents, we likely have more who were not counted by the census. Also, we are working on a General Plan update that envisions another 45,000 residents in 16,000 new units by the year 2045.

Much of the housing development you now see is to accommodate the demand. We are the region’s workforce housing. We have many housing units that have more than one family living in them, and we have a need for more housing options for our employers. Much of the building activity is not single-family homes but rather apartments and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).

One of the strongest economic indicators is the housing market. For the first time, the median sales price for a house in Santa Maria topped the $500,000 level. The sold to list ratio is defined as the final sale price – what a buyer paid for the home, divided by the last list price expressed as a percentage. If it is above 100 percent, the home sold for more than the list price. If it is less than 100 percent, the home sold for less than the list price. We were above 100 percent from September 2021 to July then it dipped under 100 percent but is still around 97 to 99 percent.

Very exciting is what’s ahead with downtown revitalization near Broadway and Main (Highways 135 and 166). We have heard for years that our residents want a downtown that is pedestrian friendly and with more places to go. The City is working with a local development company who has already purchased several properties, with plans to construct new housing and retail spaces, with open space/entertainment venues. This will be transformational.

We continue to cement our location as the region’s shopping venue. The increased revenues are allowing the City Council to expand services and reinvest in infrastructure. For example, the Council has doubled the amount of local road funding this year and next.

You may watch the State of the City presentation on our government Comcast Channel 23 where it is cablecast at 3:00 p.m. daily, and at https://youtu.be/vZSZdbxquOo on our YouTube channel. Thanks for all the dedicated efforts each of you bring to serve our community.