Dear Sierra Madre,

Halloween is an important tradition in Sierra Madre, and this year the City will continue to support a full day of activities, including downtown trick-or-treating, a Halloween festival in Memorial Park, and the Alegria street event.

We know some residents and businesses would prefer to see Sierra Madre Boulevard closed, and we understand that sentiment. However, this year the City is taking a different approach for one simple reason: safety and resources.

Historically, City street closures have relied primarily on lightweight barricades and traffic cones. Those devices are useful for directing traffic, but they do not provide meaningful protection if a vehicle attempts to enter a pedestrian area. The City does not currently have the equipment necessary to safely support a full downtown closure with the level of physical protection appropriate for a large pedestrian event. As we update our special event practices, we are moving toward a safer and more comprehensive approach to traffic control and pedestrian protection.

At the same time, Halloween includes three separate event areas requiring Police, Public Works, Community Services, traffic control, equipment, and other City resources. The evening Alegria event alone can attract thousands of people and requires significant public safety staffing, vehicle barriers, lighting, traffic management, parking controls, and emergency planning.

Last year, Alegria experienced major traffic congestion, three missing children—including one child with special needs—and a multi-suspect robbery. Those experiences are informing how we plan this year's event.

For downtown trick-or-treating, Sierra Madre Boulevard will remain open to vehicle traffic and crossing guards will be stationed at key locations throughout downtown to assist pedestrians and help families safely cross the street.

To be clear, this does not mean downtown street closures and related events are going away permanently. As the City develops a clearer Special Events Policy and builds the equipment and procedures needed to support larger closures safely, we will continue evaluating how these cherished community events can be improved going forward.

We understand that changes to longstanding traditions can be difficult, especially in a community that values them so deeply. At the same time, the City has a responsibility to protect residents and visitors, and we remain committed to preserving these traditions in ways that are safe, thoughtful, and sustainable.

Our goal this year is to keep Halloween fun and welcoming while responsibly balancing the City's resources with the experiences and traditions you love about living in Sierra Madre.

We look forward to a safe, spooky, and ghoulishly good Halloween. See you on October 31!

Sincerely,

Mike Bruckner
City Manager