



CITY OF ELIZABETH

Great Business. Vibrant Communities. A New Energy.



State of the City 2019

Reverend Clergy, Members of the City Council, Elected Officials, Members of the Elizabeth Board of Education, friends and residents:

- A commitment to creating opportunities:
 - Is not about what we can do now
 - It is about the impact our actions will have on the future

- Preserving our environment:
 - Conserving resources
 - Encouraging individuality
 - Embracing diversity

- We celebrate:
 - Who we are
 - Who we want to be
 - And it is through the plans we make
 - The steps we take
 - That will make the difference - that will last lifetimes

- The State of our City is strong, because our dedicated and proven leadership, hardworking residents and innovative partners, continue to:
 - Increase safety
 - Recognize creativity
 - And deliver the results that transform lives

- Our efforts have been acknowledged by Moody's Investors, who assigned our city the Aa3 rating with a stable outlook.

- Impressive progress is taking place in the Planning and Community Development Department, where:

- Construction has begun on:
 - Twenty-three, 2-family homes on South 2nd Street
 - Forty-five market-rate units at Madison and Chestnut
 - A new, state-of-the-art Seafrigo refrigerated warehouse on Newark Avenue

- Addressing eyesores and altering landscapes, previously vacant parcels are being re-imagined, producing:
 - 167 market-rate units on Murray Street

- New Raymour & Flanigan warehouse, showroom at the former RexPlex facility
- New Jersey Transit has awarded a contract to Anselmi & DeCicco for the Midtown Train Station:
 - Final design and construction
 - Of platform replacement and station facilities
- This eagerly-anticipated project will include:
 - Covered, climate-controlled waiting areas
 - Renovated, additional elevators, stairways
 - Upgraded passenger-information and security systems
- With our growing population and increasing number of visitors, the Parking Authority continues to upgrade existing services and incorporate valuable options:
 - New camera system, electrical charging stations
 - LED lighting – enhancing safety, energy efficiency
 - Expanding the Mobile Now! parking app - with plans to increase availability throughout the city
- Adding more convenience, a new Bike Depot was unveiled near the Midtown Train Station. As only the 3rd of its kind in the state, it:
 - Provides secure, weather-protected storage for bikes, helmets, personal items
 - Made possible by the city, Elizabeth Development Company, New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition
- Incorporating improvements and sharing our commitment to preparedness is the Housing Authority:
 - Installing new heat, hot water system at Farley Towers
 - Upgrading Heat Distribution System at Kennedy Arms
 - Completing emergency generator projects at 205 First Street, O’Donnell Dempsey
- Ensuring operations are maintained and securing infrastructure are imperative.
- And as we continue enhancing our quality of life, we are approaching and developing opportunities with creativity, identifying:
 - Tools needed
 - Dedicated spaces
 - Needed to showcase the inspiration and imagination of our residents
- The Elizabeth Avenue Partnership is creating opportunities for our impressive young artists to:
 - Apply their talent
 - Beautify our community
 - Celebrate what can be accomplished by working together

- Decorative murals were painted:
 - At 16 sites along Elizabeth Avenue
 - Both sides of 7 traffic boxes and 2 locations at Union Square
 - Elizabeth Public School students submitted artwork over a two-year period and were chosen by the Partnership to transform their vision into reality

- Building upon this successful collaboration, the Partnership also worked with the Elizabeth Public Schools Art Department on the creation of holiday decorations:
 - Wooden scarecrows
 - Toy soldiers
 - New snowmen at Union Square

- The Avenue remains a thriving corridor, with a nearly 95% occupancy.

- From retail and services to diverse eateries and markets, the success of this Special Improvement District continues, welcoming 28 new businesses:
 - Tuta Power Tools
 - La Choza Peruvian Restaurant
 - iCargo Shipping NJ

- The Midtown Special Improvement District also recognizes the importance of business attraction and retention, providing:
 - Dependability
 - Quality
 - And community connections

- The Midtown Historical Re-enactment, along with the Car and Bike Show, draw hundreds of residents and visitors, remarking:
 - About the improvements taking place
 - New housing, stores, economic development
 - Success of Broad Street as a shopping destination

- One of the biggest investments that can be made, is in the health of an individual:
 - Maintaining wellness
 - Managing an illness
 - Choosing the care that is right for you and your family – are not just important, they can be life-saving

- Trinitas Regional Medical Center continues to be a frontrunner for health care within our region. Its:
 - Proven leadership
 - Qualified professionals
 - State-of-the-art facilities – increase options and enable the latest in treatment to be delivered

- Trinitas understands the difference that can be made when the resources you need; are available at the time you need them.
- For their commitment, they received the first-ever Public Health Innovator Award from the New Jersey Department of Health.
- And they continue to create opportunities for individuals to feel better and improve their quality of life:
 - Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation for the treatment of depression
 - Dedication of the \$3.4 million dollar Connie Dwyer Breast Center
 - And this year – the former Alexian Brothers Hospital on East Jersey Street will undergo a \$4-million-dollar renovation
- The Department of Health and Human Services helps residents:
 - Protect against illness
 - Safeguard their families
 - Live long, healthy lives
- Connecting members of our community to vital services, the Health Department provided:
 - 195 Childhood Lead Screenings
 - 389 Adult flu shots
 - 878 Immunizations - preventing the spread of illness
- Avoiding exposure to sickness and harmful elements promotes good health, but:
 - Physical activity
 - Social interaction
 - Supportive environments – improve the body and mind
- The Office on Aging provides residents with opportunities:
 - Bingo, arts and crafts
 - Educational presentations, computer labs
 - Visiting nurse and nutritional programs –offering the assistance needed to thrive
- Creating more ways to help seniors:
 - Receive personal attention
 - Maintain connections
 - Support our *Go Green* initiatives – the new *My Senior Center* system is enhancing interactions, improving service delivery

- With a simple swipe of their card, this technology upgrade:
 - Allows attendance to be recorded, notifications sent
 - Daily activities to be selected via touch screen
 - More cross-center communication

 - Eliminating paperwork
 - Enabling retrieval of data in an instant

- The creativity that is adding value to our seniors' lives is also helping our youth:
 - Broaden horizons
 - Advance their education
 - Achieve success

- Through SOAR, Safe Haven and Building Future Leaders, our young people are:
 - Honing skills
 - Applying creativity
 - Developing problem-solving solutions and growth opportunities

- With:
 - Team-building, strengthening workshops
 - Math and Literacy Nights
 - College and career forums

- Providing additional avenues for our youth:
 - To showcase their talents
 - Connect with community members
 - Participate and excel - our Recreation Department continues to incorporate services, activities and improvements

- 18 playgrounds
- 7 spray fountains
- 2 spray-splash parks
- Renovated Green Acres, Carteret Park Playgrounds
- Created 500 temporary jobs for youth in the summer
- Provided daily free lunches, snacks to 1500 children through the summer food program

- Renovations totaling \$3.5 million dollars are also being made at the Erxleben Center:
 - Upgrades to restrooms, lockers rooms
 - Lighting, HVAC, plumbing
 - Emergency generator
- And keeping with tradition, Playball USA was, once again, a great success:
 - With 300 attendees
 - Sharing the joy of baseball, softball
- New projects are also on the horizon:
 - Renovation of Miller Playground
 - Improvements to Hanratty, Ira Powell Little League Fields
 - Expansion of the Todd Bowles Sports Complex – new Little League Field, Basketball Courts, Fitness Station
- Advancing technology, increased options, access to social media have changed the way people:
 - Interact
 - Get their information
 - Spend their time
- Generations of the past had to go to a library to:
 - Perform research
 - Read the newest book
 - Look for newspaper articles – but with smart phones, Wi-Fi throughout our community, many are just a click away
- But our libraries remain special, because they are structures of transformation:
 - Opening doors to the past
 - Transporting readers to places they have never been
 - Expanding minds, inspiring imaginations
- With more than 450,000 annual visitors, the Library continues to offer impressive resources, assistance and experiences:
 - 200,000 books, 7200 DVDs
 - Digitized microfilm reels – including the Elizabeth Daily Journal
 - Over 25,000 Wi-Fi sessions to visitors
- Along with:
 - Literacy initiatives
 - Tax and Affordable Care Act assistance
 - Reentry Service Event
 - And in 2018, the Library became a needed high school equivalency testing site

- Prior to this designation, our residents had to travel to Union City - now, they can take the steps they need, to embark on their personal and professional journeys, right here at home.
- Whether choices are made to:
 - Continue an education
 - Join the workforce
 - Begin a career path – obtaining your GED is a positive first step
- Becoming the person you want to be, starts with proving who you are today.
- From senior citizens and students, who may not be part of the workforce to members of the non-driving public, obtaining a photo identification can be:
 - Challenging
 - Discouraging - without the necessary resources to verify your personal information
- Recognizing the hardships and negative impact this can cause, efforts have been made to expand the Municipal ID Program:
 - Offering after-work hours
 - Increasing outreach, collaborating with employment agencies
 - 1889 total participants – with enrollment and renewals on the rise
- But our efforts do not only focus on improving individual situations, it is also our shared environment that deserves and requires our attention.
- From extreme weather to changing landscapes:
 - Global warming
 - How and where we dispose of materials
 - Along with the choices we make to preserve, conserve and allocate resources
 - Will determine the ecological future that we and the next generation, will face
- Through our *Go Green* initiatives, we have:
 - Increased efficiency
 - Improved effectiveness
 - Reduced our carbon footprint
- Continuing this commitment and helping residents comply with new regulations, the Recycle Coach app was launched:
 - Free, accessible on the City’s website
 - Offering customized collection, pick-up schedules

- Providing information on what can and cannot be recycled - increasing convenience, delivering answers, reducing paperwork
- Safeguarding our environment from further harm requires all of us to do our part.
- The Public Works Department spearheads initiatives, which beautify and support our neighborhoods:
 - Maintaining hundreds of curb-side trees
 - Providing landscaping in all parks, river trails, paths
 - And this year, in addition to the 150 trees planted through the Greening Union County grant – any resident, who wants a tree planted anywhere on their property, just has to contact the Public Works Department - and we will plant it for them
- This new *Go My Tree* program adds another level of commitment to our *Go Green* and environmental preservation efforts by infusing natural elements that:
 - Improve air quality
 - Complement neighborhood character
 - Line and define streets
 - So I am asking all of you - help us reach our goal of planting 2500 trees by 2020
- Connecting activities that are:
 - Green-based
 - Environmentally-positive
 - Community-enhancing, are Future City Inc. and Groundwork Elizabeth
- Groundwork is changing lives through urban agriculture.
- In collaboration with the city and local partners:
 - The MicroFarm behind the Elmora Library continues to be a success
 - 50 garden beds, six beehives – producing honey later this year
 - Teaching Garden and Ag Lab 4, which is the Board of Education’s Farm Education Station
- And soon:
 - An Insectary and Butterfly Garden – certified as a Wildlife Habitat and Monarch Station
 - Market Garden – producing fruits and vegetables for food deserts, through Groundwork’s Mobile Market
 - Jerry’s Greenhouse – providing free seeds to more than 100 community and school gardens in Union County
- Creating a more environmentally-sound region, Groundwork is:
 - Working with the City, CDBG Program, PSE&G Foundation
 - Developing green-related career training programs

- Classes have begun at Union County College with additional experience gained in outdoor activities
- Further strengthening connections and promoting healthy living, Groundwork:
 - Visited senior centers in coordination with the Office on Aging and Shaping Elizabeth
 - Hosted the 15th Annual Tour de Elizabeth – where more than 800 bicyclists road through our city:
 - Experiencing new development
 - Historical sites
- Enhancements continue to be incorporated at the Elizabeth River Trail:
 - Design of Phase 4 continues
 - Extending from South Broad to West Jersey Street
 - Providing a designated bike trail, which connects areas of interest, modes of transportation
- Our dedication to constructing new throughways, improving existing corridors, remains strong.
- Over 7 miles of roadway have been paved, including:
 - East Grand, Jefferson
 - Madison, Monroe Avenues – addressing potholes, making travel easier
- One of the great things about our community is the close proximity to:
 - Fine dining
 - Shopping
 - Entertainment – and with more than 15 million visitors a year, The Mills at Jersey Gardens is exceeding expectations
- New stores are increasing variety and giving consumers more reasons to shop:
 - Sephora, Dockers
 - DKNY, Columbia Factory Store
 - Amazon, Polo Ralph Lauren Kids
- And as one of our dedicated partners, the mall remains committed to giving back, improving services:
 - Opening the Simon Youth Academy for at-risk students
 - An international visitors lounge, sponsored by the Elizabeth Destination Marketing Organization
- With so much in the news today about:
 - Turning people away
 - Minimizing assistance to those in need
 - Now, more than ever, access to affordable, quality resources is vital

- Union County College offers opportunities for students to:
 - Learn
 - Excel
 - Obtain a degree - right here at home

- Continuing formal education after high school is essential – but also expensive.

- Thanks to the efforts of Union County College and Governor Phil Murphy, the dream of receiving a higher education just became a reality.

- Union County College has been chosen as one of thirteen institutions to participate in the New Jersey Community College Opportunity Grant.

- Eligible students will attend school:
 - Free of tuition
 - Beginning in Spring 2019

- Developing a strong foundation for success is also about finding a way to:
 - Grow personally, professionally
 - Support yourself, your family

- The Workforce Innovation Business Center is here to help. Located at Union County College’s Elizabeth campus, it offers:
 - 13 workplace readiness classes
 - 20 major hiring events, creating more than 800 jobs

- Working closely with the:
 - City
 - County
 - Board of Education - to post job openings on websites, social media platforms– their efforts have:
 - Prepared
 - Connected
 - Created opportunities for more than 2,000 residents

- The Elizabeth Development Company’s Workforce Development and Education Program continues to increase services:
 - Information sessions
 - Job Fairs, recruitment events

- And through the NJBUILD initiative more than 250 candidates were reached:
 - Including graduates from the pre-apprenticeship program
 - Obtaining their OSHA 30 certification
 - Receiving training in plumbing, general construction, electrical/HVAC certifications

- Whether it is:
 - Being ready for the next phase of your life
 - Having the necessary resources to excel
 - Or being equipped to provide assistance to another - preparedness is critical

- With impressive:
 - Technical ability
 - Specialized training, emergency response equipment – the Elizabeth Fire Department is safeguarding lives and property

- From:
 - Confined space and trench rescues
 - To Haz Mat emergencies and search operations, the Department responded to more than:
 - 21,000 incidents
 - 200 structure fires
 - 16,000 emergency medical calls, including extrications

- Our fleets and facilities continue to be upgraded for structural and efficiency needs:
 - 2 new ambulances – increasing response and assistance
 - Reinforcement of apparatus floors on South Broad Street– to support heavier vehicles
 - Installation of truck bay monitors – providing live, up-to-date information on incidents

- As we enter the next generation of maintaining public safety, we do so by creating opportunities and making history.

- Last year, the first female firefighter, Sheena Spence, joined the Elizabeth Fire Department.

- Following in the steps of her father, who is a Captain in the Department, Firefighter Spence continues to perform with excellence and be part of a talented team.

- Our commitment to increasing the ranks of our first responders remains strong.

- Twelve new EMTs joined our Department and later this month, eighteen new firefighters will be hired.

- The Elizabeth Police Department also continues to incorporate new strategies and techniques to protect residents with:
 - Enhanced training
 - Additional patrols
 - Reducing crime and achieving the lowest homicide rate in twenty-five years
- But as criminal activity changes and new threats emerge, we are evolving and taking steps to:
 - Utilize all available resources
 - Increase access to information
 - Improve visibility
- State-of-the-art technology is changing the way law enforcement:
 - Receives information
 - Formulates plans of action
 - Addresses dangerous situations
- Educational institutions throughout our country continue to be targets of threats and incidents.
- Taking proactive steps to increase the security of students, faculty and staff requires:
 - Ability to view potential dangers
 - Gather important details to make necessary decisions
- Working with the Elizabeth Board of Education, the Police Department will have:
 - Capacity to activate and view live video from schools
 - Situations will be seen in real-time, enabling the most efficient and effective deployment of resources
- Removing as much uncertainty as possible, is key to gaining control of high-risk situations.
- The Police Department, in accordance with individual privacy laws, has received approval from the FAA to incorporate four drones.
- And this month, we will be adding twenty-nine new police officers, further improving our ability to protect and serve
- Communication and timely response, are the first steps to delivering the quality services our residents need and deserve.
- Last year, our city website was hacked and immediately we took steps to:
 - Increase outreach
 - Raise awareness

- Provide information – through our social media sites, temporary website
- An RFP was developed, bids were received and a vendor was chosen to create new websites for the city, Police and Fire Departments.
- Our new website is under development and will streamline operations and expand services:
 - Increased communication tools
 - Supporting electronic access to public services
 - Enhancing e-government transactions
- With more features, options and convenience, individuals will also be able to:
 - Make online payments for taxes and fees through MuniPay
 - Complete an online police report for minor incidents through CopLogic
 - Convey and report concerns through GovPilot – information is instantly provided to the appropriate department resulting in quicker response time, efficient resolutions
- Increasing accountability and effectiveness, the city will also be implementing a vehicle tracking system on non-public safety vehicles:
 - Providing idle times, locations
 - Activity reports
 - Enabling estimated time of arrivals – improving coordination and communication
- It is about the possibilities that:
 - Rise from an idea
 - A non-traditional outlook
 - An improbable vision - that provide the keys to impressive development, essential services and life-changing solutions
- From:
 - Enhancing tourism efforts, increasing our city's domestic and international exposure
 - To developing outlets, showcasing creativity and highlighting our contributions
 - The Elizabeth Destination Marketing Organization (EDMO) continues to be an innovative catalyst for growth
 - Excursions with Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruise Lines
 - Working with Newark Liberty International Airport to promote events
 - Participating in tourism tradeshows - promoting Elizabeth in 11 states and 3 countries
- And the work has just begun

- Together with city officials and the Greater Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce, EDMO is exploring the creation of a Tourism Improvement District:
 - Modeled after our Special Improvement Districts
 - Increasing hotel occupancy, employment opportunities
 - Supporting marketing efforts, elevating brand capabilities

- From self-expression to enriching community spaces – Art:
 - Broadens horizons
 - Transforms locations
 - Enhances destinations

- Celebrating our:
 - Experiences
 - Opinions
 - Multiculturalism

- Our city believes art should be:
 - Embraced
 - And supported

- So this year, city representatives will work closely with:
 - EDMO
 - The Elizabeth Arts Council
 - The Board of Education

- To create an Economic Development Arts Council:
 - Designing guidelines to infuse art in anticipated developments within our city
 - Providing recommendations for artistic representation in existing housing, businesses, entertainment projects
 - Supporting their new mission, which is *Developing artistry develops our economy*

- The new *Go My Art* objectives will include:
 - Facilitating public art pop-up exhibits
 - Available as traveling and fixed locations
 - Featured in underutilized spaces, business districts, major corridors

- Combining expertise, talent and creativity of our residents:
 - Murals will also be developed
 - Highlighting our history, diversity, points of interest
 - Exploring the use of non-traditional sites

- The poet and philosopher Henry David Thoreau once said, “this world is but a canvas to our imagination.”
- Our municipal departments and partner agencies continue to re-imagine resources and think outside-the-box to not only meet the needs of our residents, but incorporate initiatives that:
 - Enrich
 - Empower
 - Feed creative drives and inspire the soul

 - It is the creation of opportunities
 - Preservation of environments
 - Meaningful connections and services - that enable our residents to be courageous and reach their full potential.
- May God Bless the City of Elizabeth and May God Bless America.

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