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

- Opportunities are:
  - Earned
  - Presented
  - Created, Developed

- Catalysts for reinvention, avenues for growth –
  - Increasing resources
  - Expanding services
  - Transforming neighborhoods

- The State of our City is strong – because we:
  - Embrace growth
  - Enhance preparedness
  - Cultivate opportunities - move forward to an inspired, impressive future.

- Moody’s Investors Service continues to recognize our:
  - Dedication
  - Achievements
  - Vision for reinvention - by affirming an upgraded AA2 rating, positive outlook for our City.

- Together with our partners, we are committed to reinventing homes, restoring opportunities:
  - Affordable units completed on Division Street
  - And later this year, the Housing Authority will work with the Elizabethport Presbyterian Center, Coalition to House the Homeless, on plans to:
    - Construct 110 more units
    - First and Third, Marina Village
    - East Jersey, Fulton Street

- With an $879,000 award for Main Stream Housing Choice, residents will have the chance to:
  - Reinvent their living situation
  - Embrace a new beginning

- Further meeting resident needs, the Parking Authority continues to:
  - Reinvent critical services
  - Increase resource accessibility

- Upgrades are:
  - Improving safety
  - Security
  - Communication
    - New camera system at Midtown Garage
    - Waterproofing, new concrete pads, replaced pavement at the Lapolla Garage

- As we look around our great city, it is clear to see why businesses are:
Choosing
Relocating
Coming back to Elizabeth

• Through informative events, networking opportunities - the Greater Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce is building on this successful transformation:
  o Increased outreach efforts
  o Social media presence
  o Adding thirty new members to their impressive organization

• Elevating our presence as a:
  o Shopping center
  o Historical destination
  o Tourist attraction – the Elizabeth Destination Marking Organization is making sure everyone knows about our city.

• From:
  o Increasing exposure at events
  o To supporting growth, development opportunities
  o EDMO continues to promote, showcase, advance our remarkable municipality

• Collaborating with dedicated partners:
  o The Mills at Jersey Gardens
  o Newark Liberty International Airport

• EDMO is altering perceptions, highlighting contributions, delivering the best of our community:
  o Training, educational, informational displays
  o New airport signage - EDMO is elevating our visibility - locally, regionally, globally.

• Last year, I reiterated the significance of art within our community:
  o Creativity
  o Imagination
  o Expression

• With the creation of the Economic Development Arts Council:
  o Coordinating artistic displays
  o Highlighting gifted residents

• Partnering with EDMO, the Economic Development Arts Council collaborated with William F. Halloran School #22 to honor our city’s rich history with the painting of historic postcards:
  o Created by students ages 13 and 14
  o Capturing Midtown Elizabeth’s extraordinary past
  o Displayed at a groundbreaking in Midtown and within City Hall

• Efforts have also resulted in the featuring of local artists within the Hilton Hotel. Working with EDMO, this is a wonderful opportunity to:
  o Acknowledge amazing abilities
  o Provide added value for visitors, employees

• On the horizon are two murals, which will be created on Julian Place:
Highlighting Julian Kean and the Kean Family, who the street is named after
Tribute to transportation of years gone by, as our community remains a thriving travel hub
An inclusive Art Show at the Main Library, showcasing a variety of artistic mediums

• Incorporating art enriches experiences.

• For their impressive collaboration with our Public Schools, the Elizabeth Avenue Partnership was recognized with the Downtown New Jersey Excellence Award:
  - Wooden Toy Soldiers, Scarecrows
  - Snowmen, colorful flowers
  - Bringing creative flair, holiday joy to this corridor

• Teaming up with EDMO, the Elizabeth Avenue Partnership:
  - Hosted informative tours
  - Promoting diverse restaurants, bakeries
  - Focusing on the historic significance of the Avenue

• Shopping local contributes to our economy, reinvests in our community:
  - Creation of new employment
  - Opportunities for small businesses, specialty stores
  - Supporting locations, which have served generations

• Elizabeth Avenue continues to have one of the lowest vacancy rates in the State, with 15 new businesses last year:
  - Farolito Steakhouse
  - Karla’s Jewelry
  - Elizabeth Pet Grooming - demonstrating that business attraction and retention is alive and well.

• Supporting our residents on a daily basis and especially, in times of need, can make the difference that counts.

• We have been working closely with the Elizabeth Development Company to provide workforce development assistance:
  - 66 students trained in HVAC, hospitality- earning servsafe, CPR certifications
  - 25 students received Math tutoring - in preparation of Union tests
  - 10 women placed in the Laborers Union
  - 42 placed through On-the-Job Training
  - Along with 36 individuals in Laborer, Plumber, Painting Unions - through the NJBUILD grant.

• The Workforce Innovation Business Center is doing its part to strengthen residents’ chances for employment:
  - 70 new employer partnerships
  - 205 local residents provided general career services
  - 286 completed soft skills training - now available online

• Increasing access to resources - tools for skill enhancement:
  - Training for Demand Occupations
  - Training for Supply Chain Management
  - Partnering with the American Job Center

• These strides have resulted in:
• 40 new residents receiving employment
• 15 placed with United Airlines Summer Assist
• Eliminating barriers, providing foundations for success

• Most of our partnerships are local, regional, national – but with the City of Kitami, Japan – we found a:
  o Culturally-rewarding, community-enriching relationship
  o Which continues to elevate the meaning of a Sister City

• The delegation’s visit in October was in honor of our 50th Anniversary, providing an opportunity to:
  o Exchange traditions
  o Share global perspectives
  o Develop new partnerships

• Union County College signed an agreement with Japan’s Kitami Institute of Technology:
  o Providing new academic, study-abroad opportunities for students, faculty
  o Participation in research initiatives, joint education programs

• A new Sister Hospital arrangement was also celebrated between Trinitas and the Kitami Red Cross Hospital:
  o Sharing innovative programs
  o Enhancing communication
  o Increasing access to resources

• Cutting-edge approaches, the reinvention of techniques, better:
  o Assist patients
  o Treat conditions
  o Manage well-being - remain priorities of Trinitas Regional Medical Center

• Supporting this commitment, Trinitas’ Behavioral Health Services is undergoing a 4-million-dollar rehabilitation:
  o Located in the former Alexian Brothers Hospital on East Jersey
  o Nearly 200,000 visitors are seen per year, including adults, children, families

• Addressing specialized needs, addictions - this 98-bed, inpatient facility will be upgraded:
  o Increasing service ability
  o Improving care

• Later this year, Trinitas will also break ground on a new medical office building and a 300-car parking garage on its main campus:
  o Providing more efficient, effective accommodations
  o Expanding capacity, services

• Brother Bonaventure Extended Care and Rehabilitation Center has been rated one of the Best Nursing Home/Stay Rehabilitation Centers by US News & World Report:
  o Their dedication to residents, patients
  o Quality of care recovering from a hospital stay

  o Has earned them 5 stars from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
• The Health and Human Services Department continues to lead the charge in ensuring the wellness of our community:
  o 689 immunizations
  o 310 flu shots
  o 280 clients assisted at the STD Clinic

• Educating, informing residents about:
  o Risk factors
  o Preventative check-ups
  o Identifying signs when medical attention should be sought - leads to longer, more productive, healthier lives.

More than:
  o 3800 residents screened through the Lead Prevention Program
  o 2,100 educated through Public Health Workshops
  o 6,700 educated through the Elizabeth Municipal Alliance

• In coordination with Shaping Elizabeth, the Passport to Health program is helping residents achieve their health, lifestyle goals by:
  o Notifying residents, tracking progress
  o To reduce obesity, hypertension, diabetes
  o Using passport stamps, encouraging attendance at healthy living events, doctors’ visits

• With increased access to:
  o Education, employment opportunities
  o Substance abuse, mental health services
  o Medical aid, healthcare coverage - the Elizabeth Reentry Program helped more than 500 participants, reducing recidivism.

• As residents move forward on their path to success and continue their journey through life, it is imperative that comprehensive support is available - especially for our young people.

• The Office of Youth Services is reinventing approaches:
  o Guidance, leadership
  o Nurturing environments
  o Assistance, promotion of academic achievement

  o SOAR, Safe Haven
  o Building Future Leaders, C.O.D.E. Youth
  o Youth Oriented Services Program
  o New Legends of Youth program - kicked off in Summer of 2019, focusing on young community athletes.

• With emphasis on:
  o Hard work, dedication
  o Diligence, goal-orientation
  o Establishing a healthy climate to challenge, strengthen children

• Innovative program includes:
  o Tutoring hour, group workouts
  o Academics for Athletes
With:
  o Nineteen playgrounds
  o Five recreation centers
  o An impressive boxing facility
  o Two of the largest municipal spray parks in Union County - the Department of Recreation continues to create opportunities, improve the quality of life throughout our city

Over 500 young people were given employment this Summer:
  o Valuable experiences
  o Growth, development
  o Opportunities to hone skills, interact with professionals

New programs are generating excitement, with participation exceeding expectations:
  o Elizabeth Summer Basketball Camp
  o Five Day Camps, including two at Elizabeth Public Schools, in partnership with the Board of Education

Motivating our youth at camp, the Skillastics curriculum:
  o Physical fitness
  o Academics
  o Fun - to engage, enlighten, empower our young people

Increasing access, providing assistance, creating more options for our youth:
  o Special Needs Program at School #1
  o Annual Playball USA
  o Summer Food Service Program - providing free lunches, snacks to over 2,000 children daily

Reinventing our annual fireworks event, our Recreation Department incorporated a:
  o Food Truck Festival
  o DJ, music, entertainment
  o Attracting more than 3,000 people

Green Acres Playground was also re-imagined:
  o New equipment
  o Basketball court, walking path
  o Fitness station, spray park

Along with Carteret Park:
  o All-inclusive playground, basketball court
  o Celebrating individuality, embracing diversity, increasing accessibility

Later this year:
  o Final phase of the Erxleben Recreational Center will be completed:
    o New bathrooms, locker rooms
    o Lighting, floors
    o Sidewalks, parking lot
  o Completion of:
    ▪ New Miller Playground on South Park Street – basketball, volleyball, spray park
    ▪ Upgrades to Hanratty Field - improved drainage, kitchen, new playground
• Ira Powell Little League Field - new bleachers, entrance mural
  
  o Expansion of the Todd Bowles Sports Complex:
    ▪ New Little League Field
    ▪ Basketball courts, field house
    ▪ Fitness station, bathrooms, additional parking

• This past Summer generated unprecedented excitement, hometown pride - when the Elmora Troopers earned the title of 2019 Mid-Atlantic Champions, advancing to the Little League World Series.

• Captivating our city, state, nation - their:
  o Inspiring performance, commitment to excellence
  o Mastery of the game, sportsmanship
  o Poise, interactions on and off the field - were outstanding

• Celebrating their achievements, impressive display of talent - a parade was held in their honor, featuring:
  o State, county, local officials
  o Float, caravan of champions
  o Recognizing determination, teamwork, camaraderie of these young men

• Connections at every level are important, but without access to technology:
  o Information is lost
  o Opportunities missed
  o Education – delayed

• The Elizabeth Public Library has reinvented its branches:
  o More effectively utilizing space
  o Adding valuable resources, programs
  o To raise awareness, encourage reading, promote learning

• Over 71,000 searches in databases:
  o More than 15,000 audio books, DVDs circulated
  o Over 3,300 magazines, newspapers
  o Nearly 3,000 children’s books added
  o New computers were installed throughout our libraries

  o Introduction of GED testing, weekly computer classes
  o Along with yoga classes, blood-pressure screenings in collaboration with the Elizabeth YMCA, Lifelong Elizabeth

• New Sunday hours at the Elmora Branch provided services to more than 2,000 visitors.

• And the successful Library Garden, which was developed with Groundwork Elizabeth, yielded 460 pounds of produce.

• Whether it is:
  o Seasonal changes
  o Increased traffic volume
  o Wear and tear on aging infrastructure - our streets require constant maintenance to ensure integrity, safety, durability.
• The Department of Public Works continues to address these challenges:
  o Resurfacing 10 miles of roadway
  o Improving traffic systems
  o Preparing for future demands

• With nearly $400,000 in grant funding from the New Jersey Department of Transportation Municipal Aid, upgrades were incorporated at the intersection of North and Madison Avenue:
  o New LED traffic signals
  o ADA-compliant pedestrian crossing signals
  o Curbing, ramps, paving

• Through the NJDOT Local Freight Impact Fund, the City of Elizabeth received $1.8 million in funding for the resurfacing of:
  o Division Street
  o Dowd Avenue
  o York Street - rectifying the effects of heavy truck traffic
  o Reinventing approaches to citywide, regional travel
  o Creating transportation alternatives for bicyclists
  o Beautifying, maximizing underutilized spaces - the City has been awarded $710,000 in NJDOT Municipal Aid funding for Phase V of the Elizabeth River Trail.

• Connecting Clifton Street to the New Jersey-bound Goethals Bridge bikeway/walkway, extension includes:
  o 10-foot wide path
  o Offering scenic views, additional commuting options for New Jersey, Staten Island residents

• Progress on the Trail continues:
  o Phases 1-3 are complete
  o Design is underway for Phase 4, which will take place between South Broad Street and West Jersey Street
  o Construction scheduled to begin later this year

• The Elizabeth River Trail has become a favorite recreational location:
  o A designated bikeway with added value
  o Connections to main corridors, sites of interests
  o Increasing options, supporting our Go Green efforts

• Last year, I announced our ambitious tree planting initiative, which will further assist in:
  o Greening our environment
  o Beautifying our neighborhoods
  o Increasing ecological benefits

• Brochures were mailed out citywide:
  o Detailing program guidelines, impacts
  o Offering choices on types of trees, potential growth, prime locations for success
  o Planted by the city, with no cost to the owner, a positive response was received

• Participation in this exciting program has been impressive – and along with the River Flood Control project, Greening Union County Grant:
  o Over 1,000 trees have been planted
  o With more to be placed later this year
Recycling, graffiti removal efforts are ongoing. We remain dedicated to:
   - Preservation
   - Conservation
   - Comprehensive transformations—With grant funds, enabling:
     - Distribution of leaf bags, storage containers
     - Purchase of over 1,500 recycling bins for every classroom in all our public schools

Reinvention is happening at the IKEA Center:
   - Opening of Raymour & Flanigan showroom, distribution center - at the former RexPlex site
   - Later this year, Floor & Décor Outlet will be leasing space at the former Toys ‘R’ Us site
   - Increasing options, opportunities

The Mills at Jersey Gardens celebrated its 20th anniversary in October.

This former municipal dump is an undeniable testament to what can be accomplished when:
   - Dedicated, inspired partners
   - Work together, apply resources, implement what was perceived as an unlikely vision

The Mall has been one of our city’s most successful initiatives to date, continuing to make remarkable strides more than two decades later.

Serving more than 15 million people each year, new stores are constantly being added:
   - Movado
   - Helzburg Diamonds
   - Pandora, Hope and Henry

The Simon Youth Academy at Jersey Gardens, is:
   - Among 35 alternative schools – the 1st in New Jersey
   - And last June, it graduated its first class with 7 local students

The success of our Mall is clear:
   - Accessible location
   - Recognizable stores
   - Discounted prices

Our municipality continues to work hand-in-hand with all our:
   - Partners
   - Representatives
   - Service Providers - to ensure communication with our residents is immediate, accurate, responsive

In addition to our significant presence on Social Media, our new City website is up and running:
   - Vibrant design, layout
   - More content, access to departments, forms
   - User-friendly, informative

Recently introduced GovPilot continues to have a positive impact:
   - 5,000 reported concerns addressed
   - Resolving issues quickly, more efficiently
• Further improving services –
  o Applications, payments online
  o Vendor licenses
  o Birth, Marriage, Death Certificates

• And now, property owners can pay their taxes via our website:
  o Available since October
  o Accepting E-checks - credit, debit cards
  o Nearly 1 million dollars in payments collected – reinventing operations, increasing convenience

• The ElizCounts Committee is ensuring the 2020 Census response is complete for our city:
  o Coordinating Get Out the Count efforts
  o Marketing, Communication plan
  o Improving access to federal funding

• Everyone must rise to the occasion, do their part:
  o To be involved
  o To be included
  o To be counted – because each person makes our community stronger

• Whether in your personal or professional life, time is always of the essence. Addressing:
  o Basic Needs
  o Unforeseen Challenges
  o Emergencies - often requires assistance from the people you can count on

• Days, nights, weekends - the Elizabeth Fire Department is always available to lend a helping hand:
  o Responding to more than 23,000 incidents
  o Including 255 structural fires
  o Over 15,000 Emergency Medical Calls

• Training is ongoing - honing skills, increasing preparedness:
  o Live Burns
  o Confined Space, special operations
  o Hazardous materials response

• To more effectively protect, serve:
  o New Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus for firefighters
  o New fire engine for Irvington Avenue Station later this year
  o And 17 new firefighters joined the Department in June

• Imparting:
  o Knowledge
  o Experience
  o Time - to increase opportunities, prepare our future first responders - a Fire Department Official will teach an Emergency Medical Technician Certification Course at the Halsey Health and Public Safety Academy.
• Developed in partnership with the Board of Education:
  o Students, who complete their certification as an Emergency Medical Technician
  o Will have an opportunity to seek employment with the Elizabeth Fire Department as an EMT

• Technology, advancements are re-inventing the way crime can occur and our response efforts:
  o Identity-theft, hackers
  o Sharing our lives on social media
  o Interactive door bells, deliveries to our doors - inventive and savvy criminals, are finding new ways to invade our lives.

• The Elizabeth Police Department has started a major overhaul of our citywide video camera surveillance system:
  o New 450 Terabyte electronic video storage server
  o Ocularis Video Management Software

• Anticipated acquisition of new street surveillance cameras:
  o Enhancing access to information
  o Ability to detect potential physical assaults, gunshots, glass breakage
  o Reinventing crime prevention, safety, security

• Technology is only one part of the equation - the impact of dedicated, skilled professionals cannot be overlooked:
  o 29 new police officers have joined the force
  o Increasing response, communication
  o Meaningful interactions throughout our community

• Additional training, preparedness drills - provide informed, effective response when it counts:
  o Body-Worn Cameras
  o De-escalation Techniques

• These efforts have yielded positive results:
  o Significant reduction in weapon assaults
  o 42% decrease in burglaries
  o More directed patrols - increasing community policing

• For the first time last year, we issued an RFP for Police Entrance Exam Training. Partnering with:
  o The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)
  o Hispanic Law Enforcement Association of Union County
  o 250 residents attended these free, informative sessions
  o Increasing opportunities to successfully pass the required law enforcement exam

• Our city is proud to celebrate another milestone within our Police Department – the addition of our first female motorcycle officer:
  o Securing our neighborhoods
  o Safeguarding our city

• And later this year, a new Community Policing Booklet will be available:
  o Services, resources
  o Block watch, contact information
  o Better protecting, serving residents
• Safe, aesthetically-pleasing, accessible neighborhoods - are determining factors in the successful revitalization and renewal of communities.

• For years, parcels within our Midtown have been:
  o Vacant, overgrown with vegetation
  o Underutilized, underwhelming
  o Ineffective, underperforming for prime real estate - but change is on the horizon.

• Everywhere you look, Midtown is transforming:
  o 87 Market-rate units completed
  o 8,000 square feet of retail

• Adjacent to the Train Station:
  o 267 luxury residential apartments will be built
  o Courtyard, pool, dog park, hydroponic greenhouse in partnership with Groundwork Elizabeth

• At 56-78 Murray Street:
  o Former vacant parcel will become 80 market-rate units
  o Estimated completion this Summer

• At 221 Broad Street:
  o Vacant 2nd and 3rd floors will be replaced
  o With 16 new units
  o Along with 13 new units replacing the vacant 2nd and 3rd floors of 208-210 Broad Street

• And perhaps the most anticipated development of all - the Midtown Train Station.

• Following the commitment of funding by New Jersey Transit years ago, this project is finally proceeding - with significant progress:
  o Construction commenced on the East Broad Street entrance and ramp
  o Final design, featuring artistic elements, completed later this year

• Plans call for:
  o New, longer platforms
  o Covered, climate-controlled waiting rooms
  o Upgraded cameras, security systems
  o Marquee façade, new staircase, additional vendor space

• Estimated to be fully operational in 2023, this station:
  o Will meet growing populations, increased demands
  o Provide safer travel, improved access
  o Resources, state-of-the-art amenities - that once again, make taking the train a welcomed-choice - and not a burden

• President Barack Obama once said, “…Our youth, our drive, our diversity and openness, our boundless capacity for risk and reinvention, means that the future should be ours…”
• In the City of Elizabeth, our reinvention provides opportunities to:
  o Elevate
  o Innovate
  o Re-imagine

  o Realizing potential
  o Making the improbable, possible
  o Honoring our past, shaping our future

• Taking our city to new heights - driven by creativity, purpose and progress.

• May God Bless the City of Elizabeth and May God Bless the United States of America.

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