



CITY OF ELIZABETH

Great Business. Vibrant Communities. A New Energy.



State of the City 2020

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:
 - Increased outreach efforts
 - Social media presence
 - Adding thirty new members to their impressive organization

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

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

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

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

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

- With the creation of the Economic Development Arts Council:
 - Coordinating artistic displays
 - 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:
 - Created by students ages 13 and 14
 - Capturing Midtown Elizabeth's extraordinary past
 - 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:
 - Acknowledge amazing abilities
 - 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:
 - Culturally-rewarding, community-enriching relationship
 - 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:
 - Exchange traditions
 - Share global perspectives
 - Develop new partnerships

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

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

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

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

- Addressing specialized needs, addictions - this 98-bed, inpatient facility will be upgraded:
 - Increasing service ability
 - 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:
 - Providing more efficient, effective accommodations
 - 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:
 - Their dedication to residents, patients
 - Quality of care recovering from a hospital stay

 - 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:
 - 689 immunizations
 - 310 flu shots
 - 280 clients assisted at the STD Clinic
- Educating, informing residents about:
 - Risk factors
 - Preventative check-ups
 - Identifying signs when medical attention should be sought - leads to longer, more productive, healthier lives.

More than:

- 3800 residents screened through the Lead Prevention Program
 - 2,100 educated through Public Health Workshops
 - 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:
 - Notifying residents, tracking progress
 - To reduce obesity, hypertension, diabetes
 - Using passport stamps, encouraging attendance at healthy living events, doctors' visits
 - With increased access to:
 - Education, employment opportunities
 - Substance abuse, mental health services
 - 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:
 - Guidance, leadership
 - Nurturing environments
 - Assistance, promotion of academic achievement
 - SOAR, Safe Haven
 - Building Future Leaders, C.O.D.E. Youth
 - Youth Oriented Services Program
 - New Legends of Youth program - kicked off in Summer of 2019, focusing on young community athletes.
 - With emphasis on:
 - Hard work, dedication
 - Diligence, goal-orientation
 - Establishing a healthy climate to challenge, strengthen children
 - Innovative program includes:
 - Tutoring hour, group workouts
 - Academics for Athletes

- With:
 - Nineteen playgrounds
 - Five recreation centers
 - An impressive boxing facility
 - 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:
 - Valuable experiences
 - Growth, development
 - Opportunities to hone skills, interact with professionals

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Later this year:
 - Final phase of the Erxleben Recreational Center will be completed:
 - New bathrooms, locker rooms
 - Lighting, floors
 - Sidewalks, parking lot

 - 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
- 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:
 - Inspiring performance, commitment to excellence
 - Mastery of the game, sportsmanship
 - Poise, interactions on and off the field - were outstanding
- Celebrating their achievements, impressive display of talent - a parade was held in their honor, featuring:
 - State, county, local officials
 - Float, caravan of champions
 - Recognizing determination, teamwork, camaraderie of these young men
- Connections at every level are important, but without access to technology:
 - Information is lost
 - Opportunities missed
 - Education – delayed
- The Elizabeth Public Library has reinvented its branches:
 - More effectively utilizing space
 - Adding valuable resources, programs
 - To raise awareness, encourage reading, promote learning
- Over 71,000 searches in databases:
 - More than 15,000 audio books, DVDs circulated
 - Over 3,300 magazines, newspapers
 - Nearly 3,000 children’s books added
 - New computers were installed throughout our libraries
 - Introduction of GED testing, weekly computer classes
 - 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:
 - Seasonal changes
 - Increased traffic volume
 - 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:
 - Resurfacing 10 miles of roadway
 - Improving traffic systems
 - 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:
 - New LED traffic signals
 - ADA-compliant pedestrian crossing signals
 - Curbing, ramps, paving

- Through the NJDOT Local Freight Impact Fund, the City of Elizabeth received \$1.8 million in funding for the resurfacing of :
 - Division Street
 - Dowd Avenue
 - York Street - rectifying the effects of heavy truck traffic

 - Reinventing approaches to citywide, regional travel
 - Creating transportation alternatives for bicyclists
 - 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:
 - 10-foot wide path
 - Offering scenic views, additional commuting options for New Jersey, Staten Island residents

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

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

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

- Brochures were mailed out citywide:
 - Detailing program guidelines, impacts
 - Offering choices on types of trees, potential growth, prime locations for success
 - 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:
 - Over 1,000 trees have been planted
 - 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 1500 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 –
 - Applications, payments online
 - Vendor licenses
 - Birth, Marriage, Death Certificates

- And now, property owners can pay their taxes via our website:
 - Available since October
 - Accepting E-checks - credit, debit cards
 - 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:
 - Coordinating *Get Out the Count* efforts
 - Marketing, Communication plan
 - Improving access to federal funding

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

- Whether in your personal or professional life, time is always of the essence. Addressing:
 - Basic Needs
 - Unforeseen Challenges
 - 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:
 - Responding to more than 23,000 incidents
 - Including 255 structural fires
 - Over 15,000 Emergency Medical Calls

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

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

- Imparting:
 - Knowledge
 - Experience
 - 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:
 - Students, who complete their certification as an Emergency Medical Technician
 - 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:
 - Identity-theft, hackers
 - Sharing our lives on social media
 - 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:
 - New 450 Terabyte electronic video storage server
 - Ocularis Video Management Software

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

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

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

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

- For the first time last year, we issued an RFP for Police Entrance Exam Training. Partnering with:
 - The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)
 - Hispanic Law Enforcement Association of Union County
 - 250 residents attended these free, informative sessions
 - 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:
 - Securing our neighborhoods
 - Safeguarding our city

- And later this year, a new Community Policing Booklet will be available:
 - Services, resources
 - Block watch, contact information
 - 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:
 - Vacant, overgrown with vegetation
 - Underutilized, underwhelming
 - Ineffective, underperforming for prime real estate - but change is on the horizon.
- Everywhere you look, Midtown is transforming:
 - 87 Market-rate units completed
 - 8,000 square feet of retail
- Adjacent to the Train Station:
 - 267 luxury residential apartments will be built
 - Courtyard, pool, dog park, hydroponic greenhouse in partnership with Groundwork Elizabeth
- At 56-78 Murray Street:
 - Former vacant parcel will become 80 market-rate units
 - Estimated completion this Summer
- At 221 Broad Street:
 - Vacant 2nd and 3rd floors will be replaced
 - With 16 new units
 - 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:
 - Construction commenced on the East Broad Street entrance and ramp
 - Final design, featuring artistic elements, completed later this year
- Plans call for:
 - New, longer platforms
 - Covered, climate-controlled waiting rooms
 - Upgraded cameras, security systems
 - Marquee façade, new staircase, additional vendor space
- Estimated to be fully operational in 2023, this station:
 - Will meet growing populations, increased demands
 - Provide safer travel, improved access
 - 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:
 - Elevate
 - Innovate
 - Re-imagine

 - Realizing potential
 - Making the improbable, possible
 - 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.

--30--