THE STATE OF THE CITY 2018

Good Evening Council President, Elected Officials, Family, Friends and Residents.

Before I begin my address I would like to

take this opportunity to congratulate our

newly elected Councilman of the 4th ward

Alfred Mohammad(….), and newly elected Councilman of the 6th ward John Francis Roman. –Blurb (Alfred M. – Thank You)

Congratulations to Councilwoman Michele Yamakaitis on her re-election to the

8th ward and to Councilwoman Gretchen

Hickey on her re-election to the 10th ward.

I want to make it absolutely clear to each

member of this governing body -- that I pledge to work with you.

I believe if you want to go quickly, GO ALONE, if you want to go far, GO TOGETHER.

I ask you don’t allow self-imposed political obstacles to get in the way of the progress of our city. When we have conflicting views let them be REAL and not a product of political motivation.

When working TOGETHER we can accomplish great things for our city.

In 2018 -- our city will be stronger because of our accomplishments this past year, and our aggressive plan for the New Year. Let me go over some of the things we accomplished in 2017.

* We eliminated the garbage tax which

was a personal priority of mine since taking office (……)

* The Blue Apron warehouse, which is located on Linden Ave on the old GM property - a 500,000 sq. ft. warehouse --- it is now completed, open and is employing over 1000 workers, many of which I am proud to say are Linden residents.
* The Cantor property, on Stiles St., which has been a perennial eyesore, and a source of many complaints, has been cleaned up, redeveloped, and is now an attractive site we can all be proud of. We are in discussions for the development of the remaining parcel on US 1 and 9 for restaurants and a potential hotel which

will also create jobs and ratables for Linden residents.

* The Linden First Program continues to be a total success, under the direction of Pamela Jones who is a part of our Economic Development Team.

This is a jobs program I started after I first took office. In 2018 we will expand this program to include a summer employment program for both High School and College Students.

* On the former General Motors property, now known as the Duke property -- the construction of a new Super Walmart is scheduled to break ground January 30, 2018. Duke and their partners Cypress are also proposing a hotel, 2 restaurants and are in conversation with the FAA to build a WAWA between Pleasant Ave. and Hampden St.
* Park Plastics on Park Ave. across route 1 & 9 at Bedle Pl. has been demolished and the redevelopment agreement is close to being signed and I am cautiously optimistic that there will be a shovel in the ground 2nd quarter of 2018 – developing 14 beautiful single family homes. I would like to personally thank Councilwoman Michele Yamakaitis, and our former LEDC Director Rich Puschel for bringing this to fruition.
* On the United Lacquer site, located on W. Elizabeth Ave., we have a developer who once the redevelopment agreement is signed will build over 300 modern rental units with retail space and a restaurant below. This will finally eliminate this contaminated site.
* At the JTG Scaffolding site the redeveloping project on Elizabeth Ave. is scheduled for a closing on January 25th, 2018. This will bring an additional 200 rental units in our transit area.
* The 2nd phase of the Capodagli/Meridia project has started and the demolition has begun. I believe that this section of South Wood Avenue will change the whole dynamic of the area. This new building will have a different architectural design then Phase 1. With this area redeveloped -- I am recommending that Council support my efforts to have a new train station built, which is long overdue.
* Ammon Analytical is now operating in the building next to the promenade building on Wood Ave., which had been vacant since the early 2000’s and is now fully utilized. There are over 100 employees in the building -- with approximately 30 of these employees being Linden residents. These employees will add a needed boost to the local economy.
* This past year -- we signed a redevelopment agreement with VVR Developers for the development of St. George’s Ave. between E. Baltimore Ave. and Charles St. We are one property away from having a shovel in the ground, hopefully by the end of the 2nd quarter. This project is transformative and it will be an economic boost to the entire area – making this another major accomplishment of my administration.

Not only will VVR develop this site, they will take an active role in securing micro loans for qualified residents who are interested in establishing business in their development.

One of the things we have been considering and have communicated to industry for 2018 is the Hazardous Materials Storage Fee. I firmly believe that this fee would generate substantial additional revenue which would negate the increased costs for our police and fire departments. It is time these companies pay their fair share in the protection of their assets.

As you have heard we have an aggressive agenda for 2018. All these projects are geared toward stabilizing taxes here in the city of Linden.

Our commitment to stabilize taxes is

ongoing. I will be talking to the Board of

Education, our Union County Freeholders

and asking them for a tax holiday in the City

of Linden. I feel very strongly that just

because we have a 2% cap, that does not

mean we have to utilize and raise taxes that

2%. I am proposing a ZERO tax increase

for 2018.

It is time TO STOP TALKING about it and

LET’S JUST DO IT.

Let’s sit down and talk to our Board of

Education, who have members who I know

are committed to tax stabilization and

hopefully with a cooperative effort we can

get it done. LET’S JUST DO IT.

Let’s sit down and talk to our Board of

Chosen Freeholders, who have members who I know are committed to tax stabilization and hopefully with a cooperative effort we can get it done. LET’S JUST DO IT.

I’m asking this council to take the same approach. LET’S JUST DO IT.

In closing -- I would like to thank all of our

department heads for the cooperation they have given us, along with our city employees. I want to thank Alex Lospinoso

on his new assignment, as Director, of the

Linden Economic Development

Corporation. A special thanks to our police

and fire departments, I rate them at the top

of the list in the State of New Jersey.

There are times when I am in this chamber

and my eyes drift to the pictures of the

former Mayors of this City. All of them outstanding public servants -- however there is one who I will never forget – The late Mayor John T. Gregorio -- and here is

why. He told me on a number of occasions -- that his priorities in life -- were his family and the City of Linden. I have never forgot what he told me -- and I try every day to remember – Family and City.

So -- at this time -- I thank my family --- 1st my wife, children, mother and siblings for their patience, understanding, and support in my efforts as Mayor.

The job as your Mayor is a major project in my life and if you choose to re-elect me to this office this June -- I will continue working tirelessly to keep our city safe, financially sound and a city we will all be proud of. Remember -- Community, Diversity and Progress.

May your New Year be healthy and happy

and may God Bless all of us and may God

Bless the City of Linden.

Thank you and good night!