

February 6, 2025

For immediate release:

Mayor Jimmy Davis Presents Bayonne's State of the City Address 2025

Bayonne Mayor Jimmy Davis offered his 2025 State of the City address. He said, "Before we begin, I just want to express my deepest gratitude to all of you for allowing me the privilege and honor of serving as the Mayor of this incredible city for the last ten plus years. Growing up in Bergen Point, I would have never dreamed that I would be able to dedicate nearly 40 years of my life to the city I love so much as both a police officer and as a three term Mayor. I am blessed to have had the opportunity to do so."

Mayor Davis continued, "When we began this journey together back in 2014, our city was completely different. The industries that the City of Bayonne had been built around began leaving in the late 1980s. By 2014, industrial Bayonne was just a shell of its former self. And over the course of those three decades, the tax burden shifted slowly but surely from industrial properties to residential properties, The loss of tax revenue from the industrial properties caused the City of Bayonne to have a structural annual deficit that was a little over 25 million dollars in 2014. Previous administrations dealt with

the structural deficit by generating revenue from the sale of city assets. You may remember the City selling a large and very valuable portion of the Military Ocean Terminal to the Port Authority and also selling future revenue from our water and sewer utilities in order to generate one-time infusions of cash designed to keep our city solvent on a near-term basis. But none of these one-time cash infusions solved the problem, they only papered over the problem on a year-to-year basis. If you are burning your furniture to heat your house because your heating system is broken, that only works until you have no more furniture to burn, and it does absolutely nothing to fix the real problem, which is a broken heating system. That is essentially what the City of Bayonne had been doing for the better part of 20 years.”

Mayor Davis explained, “In 2014, the people of Bayonne decided to move in a new direction, and they chose my administration because we promised to partner with our residents and ‘stop kicking the can down the road’ and develop an adult, rational fiscal approach to rescuing our city from financial ruin. We immediately rolled up our sleeves and went to work. Our first order of business was to create an environment which would make Bayonne an attractive place to invest. For close to 15 years, hundreds of acres of valuable property had lain dormant at the old Military Ocean

Terminal. The City of Bayonne took title to the MOT in 2001, but by 2014 only one project of note, the Alexan, had been built there. My administration decided to even the playing field with other municipalities in Hudson County by offering Payments in Lieu of Taxes (known as PILOTs) to incentivize developers to consider investing in Bayonne and take advantage of the unique social, commercial and strategic opportunities that our city has to offer. One common misconception is that these new developments pay no taxes and that other taxpayers subsidize them. I need to stress the fact that this is simply not true. PILOTs enabled these developers and their lending institutions to revitalize abandoned, underutilized, derelict properties and repurpose them into modern facilities that offer residential and commercial properties that simply did not exist before I took office. The money realized via these PILOTs lessens the tax burden that would have otherwise been borne by our existing taxpayers. Investors, developers and their lenders view PILOTs as an important part of the fiscal calculation when it comes to investing in real estate. And invest they did. The first phase of new development created a buzz within the real estate and finance community in the New York City Metropolitan area. Sooner than anyone could have reasonably predicted,

Bayonne became the hottest real estate and commercial development market in the region.”

Mayor Davis said, “The development at the former MOTBY over the past 10 years is nothing short of remarkable. Where once there was nothing but an empty, undeveloped reminder of Bayonne’s glorious but faded past, there are now thousands of new, upscale living units, Costco, Starbucks, LIDL, LA Fitness, Amazon, UPS, and dozens of other examples of Bayonne’s glorious and promising future! 10 years. That’s a long time in the real world, but the blink of an eye when it comes to development and fiscal recovery. Hundreds of millions of dollars in investment money have flowed into the City of Bayonne over the past decade and because of the recurring revenue generated by that development, the 25-million-dollar structural deficit is long gone.

And it is clear that the MOTBY’s metamorphosis has led to a general renaissance in Bayonne as whole. As investors looked beyond the opportunities at what is now known as the Peninsula at Bayonne Harbor, it became quite obvious to them that the rest of Bayonne was ripe for investment. Much like investors, people searching for a place to live looked beyond the Peninsula at Bayonne Harbor and found a lot to like about the rest

of Bayonne. Avenue E, because of its proximity to the Light Rail, has become a residential corridor and the East side of Bayonne, again because of its proximity to both the Light Rail and Route 440, is undergoing a tremendous residential resurgence on what are, for the most part, long abandoned industrial sites that have been cleaned up and repurposed. Simply stated, Bayonne is once again a destination for residential living and investment.”

Discussing local parks, Mayor Davis said, “Ten years ago, we also made it a priority to revitalize the City’s parks and open spaces. To that end, we have undertaken the most aggressive and comprehensive park rehabilitation project in our city’s history. In fact, we have improved or have plans to improve every single park space in the city. Veterans Stadium, the Korpi Ice Rink, Dennis Collins Park, 8th Street Park, Fitzpatrick Park, Donovan Park, DeSena Park, the 11th Street Oval (which is under construction now for Buddy Baseball), Makowski Park and Dr. Morris Park, just to name a few, have been substantially upgraded over the past ten years. Russell Golding Park, what people uptown call 49th Street Park, is also slated to undergo a five million dollar upgrade in the very near future and we have completed the purchase of the pocket park located at 440-442 Avenue C which, after some upgrades are completed, will be re-dedicated as George Goldman Park We are all

especially proud that we have created a park dedicated for use by our special-needs children.”

Mayor Davis continued, “In addition to the park improvements, we have beautified Broadway with statues and allowed artists to create murals designed to mask formerly unsightly traffic boxes. We have also – and there is no other word for it – suffered as two major traffic infrastructure improvements were instituted. The construction of the new 14A Turnpike exit was a tremendous burden to our residents, but the net result is a completely revamped entrance to and exit from the city which eased and greatly improved the decades-long traffic congestion issues at 53rd Street and Ave E. But that was nothing compared to the inconvenience visited on our residents during the Bayonne Bridge’s ‘Raise the Roadway’ project, which elevated the road surface of the bridge to allow for the largest container ships to now safely pass under her, thereby guaranteeing billions of dollars in commerce to freely flow in and out of our area ports. The bridge looks different to those of us who grew up and lived here over the past half century, but future generations will love this version of the bridge as much as we loved the original. With the benefit of hindsight, the inconveniences were well worth it. As long as we are talking traffic and bridges, I am pleased to note that I am now working closely with

Turnpike officials to ensure they build a new state-of-the-art Turnpike Extension Bridge over Newark Bay, which will reduce the ever-increasing traffic issues Bayonne residents face on a daily basis. On the East side, we are expecting to finish the installation of the elevators and complete the construction of the 25th Street Pedestrian Bridge by late spring/early summer of this year and the process of installing a new pedestrian bridge across Route 440 is well underway. Finally, the culmination of all these traffic and pedestrian related matters will be centered around in the implementation of a ferry service on the south side of the Peninsula at Bayonne Harbor. The City has approved the purchase of land from the Port Authority from which the Ferry Service will operate between Bayonne and New York City. And the Request for Proposals from Ferry Operators will be received before the spring of this year, so we hope to have the service up and running by late summer/early fall of 2025.”

Mayor Davis discussed more ways in which Bayonne has progressed: “Bayonne has experienced a population increase that hasn’t been seen in many generations. People are flocking to live in our great city. Although we have many new residents, stores and workers in town, we remain committed to ensuring that Bayonne remains one of the safest cities of our size in the

United States. In fact, we strive to be one of the safest cities of **ANY** size.

Even with bail-reform laws our police officers remain committed to keeping our residents safe. We instituted a body-worn camera program long before it was mandated, and we are steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that the relationship between our police department and our community remains strong and positive. Additionally, our administration initiated a vehicle replacement program for the Fire Department, which led to the replacement of every front-line apparatus in the city. Some of these fire trucks were still in service from the 1990's, which is long past their allowable safe time in service. Our Fire Department now stands ready to serve and protect the people of Bayonne with 21st century equipment.”

Mayor Davis continued, “Speaking of 21st century capabilities, a lot has been in the news lately about the Bayonne Medical Center. For the second time in a little over 15 years, the operators of Bayonne Medical Center have had to seek protection from creditors through a bankruptcy filing. The importance of an operating and healthy Bayonne Medical Center in Bayonne cannot be overstated. Indeed, while it seems so long ago, just five short years ago during the Covid Pandemic, the Bayonne Medical Center was this administration’s most important partner as we struggled to serve the needs of

the residents of the City of Bayonne on a day-to-day and hour-to-hour basis.

It is a function of our resilience that most of us have already forgotten how difficult and uncertain times were in 2020, especially during the first several months when people were dying every day and there didn't seem to be any real answers to the questions raised by Covid-19. Stripped down to its bare essentials, the bankruptcy filing is a good thing for the people of Bayonne, and through the bankruptcy re-organization process we are already seeing an expansion of services at Bayonne Medical Center, and we can expect these services to continue to grow over time until we, once again, have a fully operational hospital to call our own."

Looking ahead, Mayor Davis said, "I have discussed our past and our present, now I want to give you a glimpse of the future. While it would have been hard to imagine in the 1980s that in the 2020s we would have a world class cruise port, a world class golf course, the largest and most modern UPS facility in the country, a completely repurposed military facility, and a modified Bayonne Bridge, it is not hard to predict that the next frontier of big change for Bayonne lies on our East side."

Mayor Davis offered his views about local industry and the Turnpike's Newark Bay Extension Bridge: "A 450-acre property, currently owned by IMTT, is in the beginning stages of its metamorphosis from a storage tank facility to a multi-use industrial/commercial site that will free up about 130 acres of waterfront land for redevelopment. IMTT isn't leaving Bayonne, it is instead consolidating its existing bulk liquid storage operations to serve its customers more efficiently while, at the same time, maximizing the potential for development of the site's waterfront and deep-water docks. When concluded, the IMTT redevelopment will have a profound social and economic impact on Bayonne and will enable us to compete with other waterfront communities for investment, jobs and revenue. With a new Turnpike Bridge designed to provide easier access to global terminals, a fully built out Peninsula at Bayonne Harbor with a ferry service, and a completely repurposed IMTT waterfront, the Bayonne of the near future will be focused on the New York Harbor and it will be more accessible than ever before to the residents of the City of Bayonne. Another positive is that this land will have to be remediated to allow for development and this also bodes well for the city. Indeed, fifty years from now, the keynote of the city's renaissance will be that the city's most

ecologically troubled sites were cleaned up, rejuvenated and repurposed productively.”

Mayor Davis concluded, “As we begin 2025, I am reflecting on all that we have done together, and I am very proud of all that we accomplished. That being said, it is now time for me to move on. I have decided to return to my first career, which is law enforcement. I truly have enjoyed my time as mayor, however, down deep, I am a cop. For the past 11 years being Mayor was what I did. But for all of my adult life, being a cop is who I am. I retired from the Bayonne Police in 2014, so that I could become Mayor. But I never stopped being a cop in my heart, in my mind and in my soul. An opportunity has arisen for me to run for Hudson County Sheriff and that is what I plan to do. This decision was not easy. Jamie, our sons and I have spent many hours discussing the pros and cons of this opportunity. In the end, we both believe that running for Sherrif is what is best for me and my family. If I am elected to serve as the Hudson County Sherrif, I will have to step down as the Mayor of Bayonne on January 1, 2026. If I am not elected, then I will continue to serve as Mayor of Bayonne. While the days were long, the years have flown by. But I will be leaving this office comforted by the fact that Bayonne is in a much

better place than it was in 2014, and the foundation has been set for it to be an ever-better place in the future.””