

## **Mayor's Address – Year in Review: 2025**

Good evening, residents, members of Council, members of our Borough staff and distinguished guests,

As 2025 comes to an end, we proudly look back on a year marked by dedication, resilience, and real progress throughout our community. We faced many challenges, especially from severe weather, but these moments also revealed the strength of our municipal team and our shared commitment to serving New Providence residents.

Let us begin by first recognizing all who serve our Borough each day.

This year, our Police Department welcomed Officers Lindsey Knopf, Nicholas Abruzzo, and Edgardo Aguilera, and Mark Martin joined as a Class III Special Officer, helping to strengthen public safety and community policing. We also recognized Nicholas Guerreiro, David Rodriguez, and Michael Carlino for their promotions. Their leadership and professionalism make the department stronger. We thank Steven Opalewski, Jason Labaska, Chad Wilson, and Robert Moran, who retired after many years of dedicated service to New Providence.

The Department of Public Works and Wastewater Treatment Plant welcomed Julian Hulsizer-Cartagena and celebrated Joseph Pasquale's promotion to Assistant Plant Operator. These steps show our commitment to maintaining and improving important infrastructure.

In Community Activities, we honored Arlene Regan for her years of service upon her retirement. We also promoted Elizabeth Lee, who continues to support programs that bring our community together.

Fiscal responsibility and finding outside funding were top priorities in 2025. Thanks to our staff and professionals, the Borough received several grants, including:

- \$50,000 from the Union County Infrastructure Grant.
- \$16,389.66 in Recycling Tonnage Grant funding
- Over \$11,000 in Opioid Remediation grants
- Community Development Block Grants totaling over \$76,000
- \$35,978.88 from the Clean Communities Grant
- \$2,000 from Sustainable NJ
- \$1,444.33 from the Alcohol Education, Rehabilitation, and Enforcement Grant
- \$6,776 from the Bulletproof Vest Partnership
- \$20,000 from the Kids Recreation Trust Fund
- \$3,000 from Greening Union County
- And a significant \$419,674 NJDOT Grant for Union Avenue

These funds allowed us to finish and move forward with major projects while keeping costs down for taxpayers.

We also made purchases and upgrades to improve safety, communication, and community spaces. To support our goal of vibrant public spaces, we added new public art: **Yellow** and **Seafoam Resting Spot** and received a generous donation of **Shared Dream** by artist Bob Hill. For safety and emergency services, we installed new rapid flashers at key intersections, added security cameras at the tennis courts, upgraded EMS radios, and bought new turnout gear for our Fire Department.

Stormwater management and emergency response were major issues in 2025. To tackle these challenges, we formed a Stormwater Committee Task Force focused on resident concerns and long-term planning. Some of the main storm-related projects we completed include:

- De-snagging work behind 309 Maple Street
- Emergency storm repairs on Deerfield Road and the surrounding areas
- Replacement of a collapsed stormwater pipe at Pittsford and Springfield
- Approval of engineering and GIS services to meet NJDEP MS4 Tier A permit requirements
- Emergency channel cleaning between Livingston Avenue and South Street
- Emergency storm drain repairs on 3rd Street
- Comprehensive storm drain lining from 4th Street to the outfall using cured-in-place pipe
- Emergency brook cleaning within the Deerfield Road easement
- Emergency restoration of Deerfield Road roadway and drainage infrastructure

These projects helped restore water flow and made our infrastructure stronger. They lowered the risk of future flooding and will help keep people safe after severe storms.

In addition to emergency response, the Borough also moved forward with many capital and operational projects, such as:

- Annual road paving and sidewalk replacement
- Police Department re-accreditation
- Repair and painting of Tennis Courts 5 through 8
- Roof replacements at the Municipal Center and Library
- Replacement of the Community Pool Bridge
- Installation of Wi-Fi at the Municipal Center
- Roof repairs at the Firehouse and Old Borough Hall
- Document scanning and records modernization
- Upgrades to the Wastewater Treatment Plant, including a new automation system
- Completion of the Borough codification project
- Submission of the 4th Round Affordable Housing Plan

- Initiation of a borough-wide property revaluation
- Development of a Community Energy Plan

To support these projects, the Borough managed important contracts and shared service agreements for waste collection, landscaping, recycling, water purification, wastewater operations, planning, architectural services, environmental monitoring, affordable housing administration, GIS services, and municipal software.

To wrap up these efforts, the Governing Body passed several important ordinances in 2025 to protect residents, improve safety, and enhance the quality of life in our community. These included setting new rules for electric bikes and scooters, allocating funds to fix storm damage, making parks and open spaces safer clarifying regulations and new rules prohibiting invasive bamboo.

None of this progress would be possible without the teamwork of our dedicated Borough Council, our borough administrator, department heads, staff, boards and commissions, and most importantly, our residents and volunteers. Your involvement and trust guide everything we do.

As we look ahead to 2026, we can be proud of what we have achieved and confident in New Providence's future.

We are a community with a proud tradition of excellence that has been my distinct honor and privilege to serve, uphold and represent. Thank you for your continued faith in me, in all of us who serve, and for all your continued support. Thank you to my wife and family, and to all the families of those who serve. It is a team effort. Without their support, patience, and sacrifice, we would not be able to serve our community in the capacity we do, so on behalf of all of us here, we thank you.

May God continue to bless New Providence and all of you. We are Pioneer Strong! We wish everyone a safe, healthy, and Happy New Year!

~ Mayor Al Morgan