

# nj

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# municipalities

Official Publication of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities



*"The beauty of strong, efficient local government is that the local officials live and often work in the community...immediately responsive to the needs of the citizenry."*

William Pikolycky  
President, NJLM  
Mayor, Woodbine

Focus:  
Leadership





# 2022 Show Off Your City CONTEST

Share your hometown pride! Please send in your photos of your tourist attractions, downtown areas, economic development initiatives, parks, city halls, community groups and new projects for the annual Show Off Your City contest.

## SUBMISSION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 3

- Entries will be posted on the League's Facebook page, website, and some will be featured in the April issue of NJ Municipalities magazine, and possibly other issues. A winner will be chosen and awarded a free League publication of their choice as well as a place of pride on the cover of the April issue.
- Photos should be high resolution JPEG files, at least 1 MB in size. Please provide photo credit if necessary. They can be sent to [aspiezio@njlm.org](mailto:aspiezio@njlm.org) or mail on CD or flash drive to 222 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608

**ENTRY DETAILS:** Unfortunately, stock photos and images that are too low resolution will not be considered. By submitting a photo, you are agreeing that you own the rights to the photo and that NJLM has permission to use the photo in NJ Municipalities, on NJLM's social media and website, and on other printed materials.

**A winner will be announced with the publication of the April issue. Please include your Facebook profile name and we will tag your photo on Facebook!**





## New Jersey Municipalities Magazine

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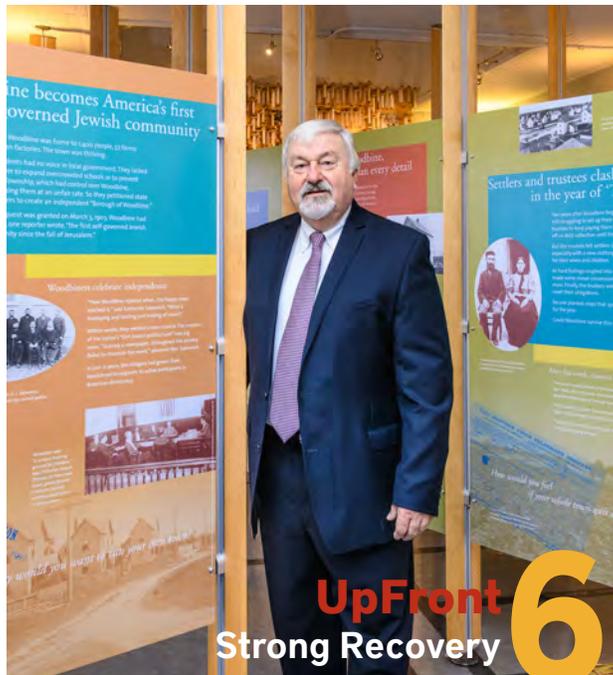
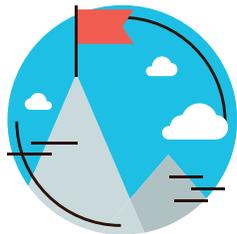
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Mayor William Pikolycky in his hometown of Woodbine prepares to lead his peers in local government as President of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities. Photos of Mayor Pikolycky and Conference photos by Paul Dempsey.

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# From 222 West State

Michael F. Cerra, NJLM Executive Director



## Leading Where You Live

Throughout early January, municipalities all around the state will reorganize, swearing in municipal officials who promise to move into 2022 as active officials, sacrificing their time and energy for the betterment of their communities. We salute you all and wish you all the best of luck in the year to come!

But we all know good leadership involves far more than good luck (though we count on a little bit of that, too). Committee meetings, board meetings, staff meetings, and oh so much reading are just the start of the life of an incoming or incumbent local government official.

As we inform the attendees of the Newly Elected or Returning Municipal Officials training programs held in the north and south of the state, successful leadership involves an understanding of how federal and state laws and programs impact local operations and knowing who to speak with on these various levels. It also involves maintaining a solid grasp of what it is to function ethically and civilly, and with fiscal responsibility.

And just as importantly is getting to know your residents and letting them get to know you can help you tap into the true strength of local government. As incoming NJLM President Mayor William Pikolycky of Woodbine noted, “The beauty of strong,

efficient local government is that the local officials live and often work in the community and thereby they can be immediately responsive to the needs of the citizenry. If they truly listen to their constituents, local government can serve as a tremendous liaison between the citizens and their elected state officials and the administrative bureaucracy.”

We look forward to supporting all of New Jersey’s municipalities this year in the spirit of what Mayor Pikolycky, said of the coming year: “Consequently, my primary goal as League President is to promote and achieve open, robust dialogue between local officials, the Legislature, and the Governor so that when new laws and initiatives are crafted, it is done in a manner that appropriately balances the needs of the State with those of the municipalities, and which is, to the greatest extent possible, reflective of the unique conditions of the communities they impact.”

Please keep in touch with us this year. Our team is here to support you and help amplify your messages to your peers and the state and federal level. Have an op-ed or story to share? Please email *NJ Municipalities* managing editor, Amy Spiezio at [aspiezio@njlm.org](mailto:aspiezio@njlm.org) or myself at [mcerra@njlm.org](mailto:mcerra@njlm.org). 📧

*Michael Cerra*

“Please keep in touch with us this year. Our team is here to support you and help amplify your messages to your peers and the state and federal level.”

**Note:** Please send in your photo entries for the Show Off Your Cities contest this month! Each year we receive and share some amazing images from around the state. We hope this year is no exception. Email entries to [aspiezio@njlm.org](mailto:aspiezio@njlm.org) or visit [www.njlm.org/showoffyourcity](http://www.njlm.org/showoffyourcity) for more information.

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# Strong Recovery

Getting back to basics with economic growth and stability is in the spotlight as Mayor William Pikolycky of Woodbine begins his term as NJLM President.



“ The beauty of strong, efficient local government is that the local officials live and often work in the community... immediately responsive to the needs of the citizenry. If they truly listen to their constituents, local government can serve as a tremendous liaison between the citizens and their elected state officials and the administrative bureaucracy.”



**Q What led you to get involved in local government?**

**A** I was born and raised in Woodbine. Back then, our community flourished with solid families, thriving small businesses, and a healthy civic life.

Unfortunately, as with many other New Jersey towns, Woodbine suffered an economic and cultural decline over the years. Having grown up in Woodbine, when I reached my early 20s I saw that what had been a thriving community, with farms, industry, and rail, had begun to decline. I became concerned with the impact that this would have on jobs and businesses as the Borough began to lose its place as the “Industrial Heart of the Jersey Cape.”

As I observed firsthand how this devastated our local families, I felt compelled to get involved and work hard to try and turn our community around. I felt that I could make a difference, and so I ran for election to council and have been in elected office ever since.

**Q What are the greatest strengths of local government in New Jersey?**

**A** Its accessibility and responsiveness to the people it serves.

In local public service—especially in small communities like Woodbine—there is no anonymity: the people we represent as Mayor are the same people we see every day at the post office, the local market, in a restaurant, or in our municipal buildings.

With this kind of two-way accessibility, it is easy to stay informed about important issues in the community—issues that can help inform and guide local government actions and decisions, thus making all of us more responsive to the needs of those whom we represent.

Similarly, organizations like the League of Municipalities allow local elected officials to share the challenges and successes in their own communities, and to speak with one powerful voice to our State representatives for the benefit of our constituents.

The greatest single strength in any government is WE THE PEOPLE. The beauty of strong, efficient local government is that the local officials live and often work in the community and thereby they can be immediately responsive to the needs of the citizenry. If they truly listen to their constituents, local government can serve as a tremendous liaison between the citizens and their elected state officials and the administrative bureaucracy.

For decades, Woodbine was a proud manufacturing hub within Cape May County as our factories produced machine tools, pocketbooks, hats, paper boxes, clothing, and cigars. It wasn’t until the late 60s that our manufacturing base began moving offshore and then local factories and storefronts were forced to close. Even regional farmers felt that they could no longer compete against the factory farms.

I believe the truth is that New Jersey workers can compete and win as long as they are given a level playing field. Accountable local government is a great first step, but it must be supported by friendly federal and state business tax policies and regulations in order for things to really change in our communities. Not only are high taxes and unnecessary regulations tremendous obstacles to bringing businesses in to the state, but furthermore, in the age of the remote workplace, high taxes only serve to motivate people to relocate to tax-friendly states. This is also true for our retired citizens who are leaving the state in droves because of high taxes.

**Q What do citizens expect from their municipal officials, and how has that changed over the years?**

**A** There is no doubt that with the growth of the internet and social media, people have the opportunity to be better informed today than at any point in the past. As such, it is much easier for constituents to be aware of happenings in the community and to ask questions about issues and projects.

With this kind of involvement, and with the accessibility afforded by the prevalence of email, people expect their municipal officials to be not only responsive, but timely in that responsiveness, simply because there is little excuse to be otherwise.

I also believe that people, especially at the local level, expect their elected leaders to be fiscally responsible. This is particularly true in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, where many families and businesses were financially devastated. People had to tighten their belts and often make very difficult decisions for their households while still being required to pay their taxes. As such, it should be no surprise that there is a legitimate expectation that elected officials be good stewards of public dollars.

## Strong Recovery

People are genuinely concerned about the direction of this country and our local governments have a responsibility to do their part to change course. They expect officials to provide a safe place to live, work, and raise their families. Most of all, citizens want officials who have integrity. They want officials who say what they mean and mean what they say. They want officials who put their constituents first and not bow down to political pressure that is contrary to the best interests of the people.

### Q What are your goals as League President?

A To encourage our local government officials to get back to basics with economic growth and stability, which in turn produces secure, safe neighborhoods.

I always think of that old sign on the bridge near our state capital—Trenton Makes, The World Takes. I want to help create the business and tax environment which will make that slogan have real meaning throughout our state. We need to start manufacturing durable goods, drugs, textiles, and expand family farming throughout our state again.

New Jersey is a diverse state, not just in terms of demographics, but also in terms of the kinds of communities we have: big cities, small towns, beach resorts, mountain retreats, and everything in between.

Moreover, and with numerous State agencies and authorities having oversight of projects and development depending on the region—some of them even overlapping—the needs of communities can often vary greatly, even when those municipalities are relatively close to one another.

Because of this diversity, the one-size-fits-all approach does not always best address local needs. Consequently, my primary goal as League President is to promote and achieve open, robust dialogue between local officials, the Legislature, and the Governor so that when new laws and initiatives are crafted, it is done in a manner that appropriately balances the needs of the State with those of the municipalities, and which is, to the greatest extent possible, reflective of the unique conditions of the communities they impact.

### Q What advice would you give to someone just elected to local office for the first time?

A There are a few basics to focus on to get started:

- Work hard to accomplish the most good for the most amount of people—put your citizens first in every decision.
- Keep lines of communications open.

- Be a good listener.
- Have communications go both ways.
- Surround yourself with proven professional advisors/consultants.

### Q How would you describe your leadership style?

A Respectful. Results driven. Optimistic. I'm truly grateful for the trust placed in me and the opportunity to serve our New Jersey municipalities.

My leadership style is hands-on, but not to the extent of being a micromanager. Central to my style is open communication with and among all those involved in a particular project. This allows everyone to be informed, it helps to foster efficiency, and it creates an atmosphere in which any issues can be quickly addressed and the project can move forward.

### Q What motivates you as a leader?

A America is a great country. I believe in freedom, self-reliance, hard-work, delayed gratification at work and home, and pursuit of the American Dream. I want to do all I can to help bring back private sector jobs to New Jersey and help economically strengthen our state and nation.

I believe that by electing me Mayor, my constituents have placed a special trust in me to always do my best while working on their behalf. I am always mindful of that when engaged in the public's business.

It is especially satisfying to take an important public project from concept to completion and then see the positive change in my community and in the quality of lives of my constituents.

### Q What challenges to you see for municipalities coming through the pandemic?

A There have been many lessons from the pandemic, but I think one of the most important is that America has to get back to being self-reliant and keep manufacturing at home. An economically strong America is not only good for all our citizens, but also good for the world. To get through this time we should be:

- Dealing with labor force issues and shortages that are

plaguing both the business community and local governments

- Working with the Federal and State governments to ensure safe and healthy communities, maximize funding opportunities, and coordinate the delivery of needed services
- Finding ways to get good information on COVID prevention and treatment into the hands of our citizens. There is too much disinformation being channeled through internet sources, social media and other outlets.
- Building back a strong local economy in the wave of significant business losses
- Properly preparing to effectively respond to future public health or other crises

than everyone else, and focus like a laser beam on creating a welcoming tax and business environment for private sector jobs, I am confident that New Jersey will see a return to our thriving communities and a hopeful future for all our citizens.

The first step should be developing written policies, procedures, and best practices, exploring potential impacts and planning effectively for worst-case scenarios. We all need to be ready to respond to community crises such as pandemics, natural disasters, and weather events so that immediate actions can be taken with little disruption and clear information can be given to the public.

To the greatest extent possible, the plan should be particularly sensitive to the needs of the business community and the delivery of emergency and municipal services.

In exploring ways to make local government more efficient and responsive to community needs might include making permanent some of the things implemented during the pandemic, such as virtual meetings, the use of electronic documents/signatures, and other such items.

Moving into recovery, municipalities need to find new strategies through which to share services and cooperate with local and regional partners. In addition, communities should look for funding available to help them build resiliency through critical infrastructure projects and community initiatives. 📌

## Q How can local governments better build resilience in their operations and community?

A Like all great leaders, local government officials are most effective and inspiring when they lead by example. **If we put our citizens first, work harder**

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## Local Government Leadership Program Achievers Honored



(left to right) Then NJLM President Mayor Janice Kovach, with honorees Mayor Judith Davies-Dunhour of Stone Harbor; Elizabeth Rossell, Committeewoman, Southampton Township; and Michael Inganamort, Council President, Chester Township; with NJLM Executive Director Michael Cerra.

At the Orientation session held at the 106th Annual League Conference, the latest class of the Local Government Leadership Program were honored for their achievements by then-President Mayor Janice Kovach of Clinton Town and NJLM Executive Director Michael Cerra.

The Local Government Leadership Program is the League's voluntary recognition program that recognizes elected governing body members who complete additional training and advocacy.

The program has three tiers; Municipal Leader, Municipal Innovator, Municipal Pioneer. Each tier has an assigned number of points. Once an elected governing body member has earned the required points, they are awarded one of these tiers. The award will be a certificate, and when appropriate a pin, mailed to them. They will also be recognized during the Orientation Session at the Annual Conference in Atlantic City.

### Leadership Levels:

- **Municipal Leader** (25 points) – Certificate awarded
- **Municipal Innovator** (50 points) – Certificate awarded
- **Municipal Pioneer** (75 points) – Certificate and pin awarded

### How to Achieve Leadership Levels

As participants collect credits, they should consider their potential participation in the LGLP program. Elected governing body members can achieve each level by attending training, seminars, writing articles for the magazine, and advocating for municipal interests.

When an elected governing body member has completed a program, they will receive a certificate of completion indicating the points earned. Once an Elected Governing Body Member has acquired the necessary points, they can send in copies of their certificates and the online application form and will receive a certificate in the mail. They will also be recognized during the League's Orientation session on Tuesday at the Annual League Conference (officials who submit application forms after September 1 will be recognized at the next year's Annual League Conference).

Participants are required to keep track of the points earned and their certificates.

### Required Activities

The two training classes below are required:

1. Orientation for Newly, Re-Elected, or Experienced - 5 points
2. Budgeting For Newly Elected Officials - 5 points

### Elective Classes

Participants may choose their participation from the list below.

- Core Issue Classes - 5 points each

Selected topics will be offered at the Annual League Conference and rotate from year to year and are indicated in the Conference application.

- Elective Activities - 3 points each
- Engage in Advocacy Efforts (League Legislative Committee, Resolutions) contact Deputy Executive Director Lori Buckelew at 609-695-3481 x 112 or lbuckelew@njlm.org for more information.
- Attend up to 2 League Professional Development Webinars or Seminars (please retain your certificate of attendance).
- Submit an article for *NJ Municipalities* magazine. Please visit the [www.njlm.org/magazine](http://www.njlm.org/magazine) for an editorial schedule and article submission guidelines. 📄

## 2021 Local Government Leadership Program Awardees

### Municipal Pioneer

Committeewoman Elizabeth Rossell, Southampton

### Municipal Innovator

Mayor Judith Davies-Dunhour, Stone Harbor

### Municipal Leader

Councilman Brandon Bernier, Roselle  
 Mayor Mary Jane Canose, Bernardsville  
 Mayor Christopher J. Chung, Palisades Park  
 Council President Michael Inganamort, Chester



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MEL has saved taxpayers \$3.4 billion dollars including \$322 million in dividends to its members since its inception. On average, each MEL JIF member has saved over \$5.7 million.

MEL also assisted its members by purchasing over \$135 million in debt securities to help stabilize the bond market disrupted by COVID-19.

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South Bergen	1986	241.7	23	10.5
Atlantic	1987	387.8	41	9.5
Camden	1987	206.9	37	5.6
Mid-Jersey	1987	177.5	12	14.8
Morris	1987	235.0	45	5.2
Ocean	1987	327.2	31	10.6
PMM	1987	83.9	4	21.0
Monmouth	1988	257.0	41	6.3
Burlco	1991	112.8	28	4.0
Trico	1991	215.6	38	5.7
NJ Utility Authorities	1991	180.7	72	2.5
NJ Self-Insurers	1992	68.2	5	13.6
Suburban Metro	1992	112.5	10	11.3
NJ Housing Authorities	1994	106.3	89	1.2
Suburban Municipal	1994	76.5	12	6.4
PAIC	1997	126.4	21	6.0
Central	1998	170.1	12	14.2
First Responders	2009	30.1	37	0.8
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>\$3.4 Billion</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>Average \$5.7 million</b>



"Tom Merchel is an outstanding example of MEL leadership at its best. The past two years have been extremely challenging, and as MEL Chair, Tom kept us focused on the importance of providing the tools and training that makes the difference when it comes to the safety, health and well-being of our members. I feel honored to be succeeding him."

#### JOY TOZZI

2022 MEL Chairperson  
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# NLC Names President, Officers, Board

The National League of Cities (NLC), the League's federal partner, has elected Mayor Vince Williams of Union City, GA, as its new president. He stepped into the new role at the 2021 City Summit held in November. Williams will serve a one-year term focused on addressing vaccine hesitation, protecting the right to vote and access to the polls, and reducing homelessness.

"I am proud to be stepping into this role at a time when America's cities, towns, and villages are leading from the frontlines," said National League of Cities President Vince Williams, mayor of Union City, GA. "Local leaders have a unique opportunity to rebuild their communities from the COVID-19 pandemic to be more equitable and prosperous places as we reclaim, renew, and reimagine every city, town, and village.

"That's why my theme for this year is focused on fulfilling the promise of America's cities through Service, Advocacy, and Action and how NLC is ready to support local leaders and deliver our piece of the promise."

Mayor Victoria Woodards of Tacoma, WA, will serve as first vice president. Council-member David Sander of Rancho Cordova, CA, was elected second vice president.

In addition to the president, NLC members also elected new members to its board of directors and appointed chairs for its policy committees.

The following individuals were appointed to the NLC board of directors for a two-year term:

- Gyna Bivens, Mayor Pro Tem, Fort Worth, TX
- Nathaniel Booker, Mayor, Maywood, IL
- Steve Callaway, Mayor, Hillsboro, OR
- Mary Dennis, Mayor, Live Oak, TX
- John Fogle, City Councilor, Loveland, CO
- John Goodhouse, City Councilor, Tigard, OR
- Rick Grady, Councilmember, Plano, TX
- Derek Green, Councilmember, Philadelphia, PA
- Heather Hall, Councilmember, Kansas City, MO
- Shannon Hardin, Council President, Columbus, OH
- Dontario Hardy, Mayor, Kinston, NC
- Emmett Jordan, Mayor Pro Tem, Greenbelt, MD
- Leo Longworth, Commissioner, Bartow, FL
- Adam McGough, Councilmember, Dallas, TX
- Denise Mitchell, Councilmember, College Park, MD
- Tara Mosley-Samples, Councilmember, Akron, OH
- Teresa Mosqueda, Councilmember, Seattle, WA
- Steve Patterson, Mayor, Athens, OH
- Stephanie Piko, Mayor, Centennial, CO
- Christopher Roberts, Councilmember, Shoreline, WA
- Joshua Simmons, Vice Mayor, Coral Springs, FL
- Jake Spano, Mayor, St. Louis Park, MN
- Ty Stober, Councilmember, Vancouver, WA
- Brian Traugott, Mayor, Versailles, KY
- Angelia Washington, Councilmember, Jacksonville, NC
- Carroll Watson, Mayor, Lincoln, AL
- Janice Zahn, Councilmember, Bellevue, WA

The following individuals were appointed to serve a one-year term on the NLC board of directors:

- Brandon Elefante, Councilmember, Honolulu, HI
- Dan Fowler, Councilmember, Kansas City, MO

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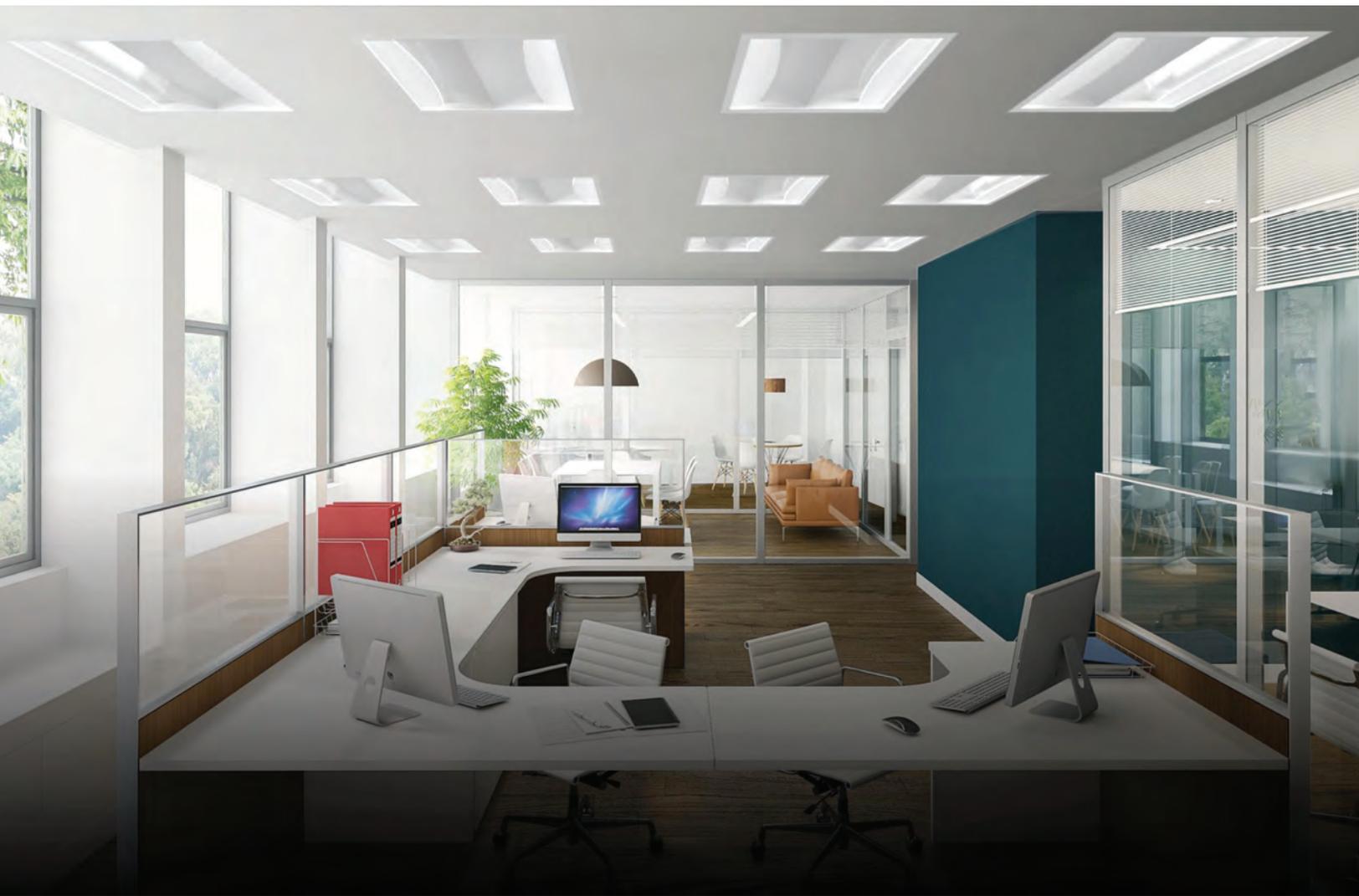



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# Scotch Plains Adopts Redevelopment Plan



The Scotch Plains Township Council has unanimously adopted a Downtown Redevelopment Plan, the first in 40 years, as the governing body envisions a vibrant mix of retail, restaurants, apartments, a new combined library and town hall, convenient and efficient public parking, and public plazas along Park Avenue and surrounding streets.

“For years, Scotch Plains residents have seen neighboring towns revitalize their downtowns and attract millions of dollars of new investments and revenue to support public improvements and other priorities,” said Mayor Josh Losardo. “Our plan puts in place a solid, pro-growth framework for downtown revitalization. In today’s economy, with competition between municipalities for jobs and investment, it is critical that Scotch Plains has a comprehensive vision for our downtown, based on sound, smart planning.”

The redevelopment plan, which determines zoning and other parameters that will outline an ultimate mixed-use project, comprises 9.5 acres of public land downtown available for private and public development.

The central business district was identified in planning documents as a concern going back to 1976. Since 1984, there have been eight major planning studies prepared for the Township’s downtown redevelopment area but none resulted in an adopted plan until this year.

“These pre-existing concerns and discussions about how to improve our downtown, coupled with the recent state-mandated affordable housing obligations, resulted in the adopted plan,” explained Scotch Plains Redevelopment Director Tom Strowe.

As part of its public outreach efforts, the Township conducted community surveys to generate input. A 2017 survey found that 86% of respondents believe that Scotch Plains downtown needs redevelopment.

Design standards were inspired by public input through an additional survey in 2018. This “Visual Preference Survey” sought community preferences of architectural themes and styles. The results were incorporated into the conceptual renderings and standards within the final plan.

“I am very proud of this citizen-led process, in which there was 35 regularly-held monthly open public meetings to reach this point,” Losardo said. “This is a complex plan with many moving parts that will require all of us to work together with an open mind while ensuring the core principles that define our town are not compromised.”

@ Please visit [www.scotchplainsnj.gov/index.php/tier-1-phase-1-downtown-redevelopment-plan](http://www.scotchplainsnj.gov/index.php/tier-1-phase-1-downtown-redevelopment-plan) to learn more.

## January 22

Orientation for  
Municipal Officials  
Westin Hotel, Mount Laurel

## February 5

Orientation for  
Municipal Officials  
Hilton Meadowlands Hotel,  
East Rutherford

## March 12

Budgeting for  
Elected Officials  
Conference Center at Mercer,  
West Windsor

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**NJ Municipalities offers a network of your peers in local government—do you have a story to share?** Whether it’s a news item, op-ed, feature, or column, your insights drive this publication.

Right now we’re looking for articles for the March (due January 15), April (due February 15), May (due March 15) and June (due April 15) issues and beyond.

If you’d like to send something in, you can get the submission guidelines from [www.njlm.org/magazine](http://www.njlm.org/magazine) or reach out to Managing Editor Amy Spiezio at [aspiezio@njlm.org](mailto:aspiezio@njlm.org)

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**2022**

# League President's Legislative Priorities



As local government officials, especially local elected officials, continue to fight the spread of COVID and lead pandemic recovery efforts, NJLM President Mayor William Pikolycky of Woodbine will focus attention on a number of priorities for the upcoming year. While some priorities are in response to the pandemic, others listed below may sound familiar. Municipal property tax relief—the number one concern for our property taxpayers—remains the League’s top priority.



## RESTORATION OF MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Due to rising costs and population growth, municipalities often need to spend more in successive years to maintain services and programs. New Jersey’s two main formula-driven general municipal property tax relief programs are the Energy Tax Receipts Property Tax Relief program (Energy Tax) and the Consolidated Municipal Property Tax Relief Act program (CMPTRA).

Though often referred to as “State Aid” programs, both are actually revenue replacement programs. They are intended to replace property tax relief funding that was formerly generated through taxes assessed and collected locally, specifically to fund municipal programs and services. In 2007, the State distributed \$1.631 billion to New Jersey municipalities. Last year, municipalities shared in only \$1.253 billion.



## SUPPORT OF HOME RULE

New Jersey has long prided itself on maintaining the principles of home rule, which has provided our residents with the most meaningful direct access to democratically elected officials through strong local governments. As the form of government closest to the people, municipalities have the immediacy of governance that brings a distinctive responsiveness and ability to shape policy to respond to the particular needs of communities.

Local control and decision making empowers the residents and taxpayers of each municipality to carefully tailor local policies that reflect its unique geography, economy, beliefs, and priorities while ensuring the greatest level of accountability and providing affected community members the greatest level of input through public hearings and easier access to elected officials.

Local legal autonomy, through the principles of home rule, has long been understood to foster participation and engagement by giving force to the outcome of local democracy, with the pragmatic give-and-take of local governance being a vital means to instill public spirit and to maximize community buy-in on policy proposals. Unfortunately, there have been recent legislative proposals and administrative action that have been introduced by state lawmakers with policies contrary to the principles of home rule.

This erosion of local autonomy threatens to undermine the benefits home rule provides to our residents. We reaffirm our support for the principles of home rule and the benefits such policies provide for our residents and our government as a whole.



## ABANDONED/VACANT PROPERTIES

Over the years, municipalities have been given the tools to address abandoned/vacant properties such as land banking, accelerated tax foreclosures

and abandoned property lists. The tools have assisted in addressing the problems that abandoned/vacant properties present—blight, threat to public safety and health, and loss of ratables. While the tools are very helpful, municipalities need a stable funding source to utilize the programs available to address abandoned/vacant properties.



### AFFORDABLE HOUSING REFORM

The executive and legislative branches have abdicated their responsibilities on this issue and municipalities are confronted with a dysfunctional, costly, and inefficient court process. As the July 2025 deadline for the “fourth round” of regulations and additional municipal obligations draws near, it is more important than ever that our legislators begin to grapple with what is sure to be a contentious issue. It is time for the executive and legislative branches to reengage on this issue and ultimately develop a reasonable, rational statewide housing policy.

This policy should include the return of regional contribution agreements, which act as an effective tool to help ensure affordable housing is made available in areas where local infrastructure and economies can help provide opportunities for advancement.



### LIQUOR LICENSE REFORM

The State’s current regulatory structure governing alcoholic beverages remains relatively unchanged for generations and creates impediments for economic growth and development.

Reform is needed to modernize these laws. We will continue to advocate reforms that permit municipalities to allow neighborhood restaurants to provide patrons with alcoholic beverages on a limited basis.



### CIVIL SERVICE OPT-OUT

For the 194 municipalities in which voters decided on participation back as early as 1910, the time has come for municipalities to have the ability to opt-out of civil service. In 1908, New Jersey was the sixth state to establish a Civil Service Commission to overcome the combination of a governmental appointment spoils system and a government that was not ready to solve specialized problems of the day. This was before any of the various state and federal labor law protections that exist today.

N.J.S.A. 11:-9-2 permits a municipality to join civil service through the adoption of a public question of the voters, but the

statute does not provide a mechanism for a municipality to withdraw from civil service.

Municipalities can and have changed their forms of government, their names, even their boundaries, but they are unable to change a century-old decision.



### OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS LAW

The Open Public Records Law (OPRA) took effect over 20 years ago in January 2001 with the goal of making government records readily accessible for inspection, copying, or examination by the citizens of this state, with certain exceptions, for the protection of the public interest while protecting a citizen’s right to a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Over the course of 20 years OPRA has been a positive light, but it has also been fraught with abuse, misuse, and costs to the taxpayers of New Jersey. Since 2001 there have been many changes—from advancements in technology, legislative changes and court decisions—to the way government records are created, stored, and transmitted. The legislature must set up a commission comprised of mayors, municipal clerks, municipal managers, attorneys, police chiefs, open government advocates, privacy experts, members of the media, citizens, and other appropriate stakeholders, to review and examine the effects of OPRA on local government. They must determine what needs must be fulfilled by the law, and use the findings of this review to perform a comprehensive reform of OPRA.



### NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM

There has not been a long-term reauthorization of the National Insurance Flood Program (NFIP) for many years. Instead, Congress continues to extend the program for short-term periods leading to long-term instability.

The League supports passage of S.3128/H.R. 5802, the National Flood Insurance Program Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2021 which takes concrete steps to improve affordability, transparency, accountability, and the long-term sustainability of the NFIP. The bill makes the program more affordable, creates greater transparency, and injects fairness into the claims process.

Under the legislation, the NFIP would be reauthorized for five years and extends the program until September 30, 2026, and caps annual rate increases to 9%, reducing the current increases by more than 15% annually. 📌

# Long-serving Leaders Inducted to NJLM Mayors' Hall of Fame



(l to r) Mayor Owen Henry, Old Bridge, Silver; Mayor Keith Kazmark, Woodland Park, Silver; Mayor Dianne Didio, Oradell, Silver; Mayor Thomas Andes, Denville, Silver; Mayor Paul Mirabelli, Borough of Mountainside, Silver; Mayor Robert Campbell, Downe Township, Platinum; Mayor William Pikolycky, Woodbine Borough, Platinum

**A**t the 106th Annual New Jersey League of Municipalities Conference in Atlantic City, then League President Janice Kovach, and officials from throughout New Jersey, honored the most recent inductees to the Mayors' Hall of Fame.

The League established the Mayors' Hall of Fame to recognize mayors who have served for over 10, 20, or 30 years. "Serving as mayor for decades is a commitment of time and energy over the long haul. These mayors have sincerely made a long-term commitment as leaders to guide and improve their communities. They have helped their communities grow and change over the years, and have worked to make a positive impact," said League Executive Director Michael Cerra. "We congratulate them on their deserved recognition."

The following members of the 27th induction class of the Mayors' Hall of Fame were honored during a special ceremony during the Mayors' Box Luncheon on Wednesday, November 17 in Atlantic City. 📍

## 2021 Inductees:

### Platinum level (30 or more years)

Mayor Edward G. Campbell III, Gibbsboro Borough

### Silver level (10 or more years)

Mayor Tom Andes, Denville Borough

Mayor Mary Ann Wardlow, Lawnside Borough

Mayor Judah Zeigler, Leonia Borough

Mayor Sam Morris, Mine Hill Township

Mayor Jay A. Gillian, Ocean City

Mayor Owen Henry, Old Bridge Township

Mayor Keith Kazmark, Woodland Park Borough

@ For the full Mayors' Hall of Fame, please visit [www.njlm.org/mayorsHOF](http://www.njlm.org/mayorsHOF)



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# 21 Resolutions Adopted at the League's Annual Conference

On Thursday, November 18, in Atlantic City, 21 resolutions mapping the new legislative and policy priorities for the League of Municipalities were adopted at the Annual Business meeting held during the League's 106<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference.

Proposed by officials currently serving in municipal office, the Resolutions are general in nature specifically focusing on municipal government interests. Prior to being adopted at the Business Meeting, the League Resolutions Committee screened these resolutions.

Moving into 2022, these resolutions will join past years' Resolutions as key priorities for the League. NJLM staff will be



NJLM Counsel William Kearns, Mayor William Chegwidden, NJLM Associate General Counsel Frank Marshall

communicating with resolution sponsors to begin working with State and Federal legislators to introduce necessary legislation, as well as taking other steps to see the implementation of these resolutions. ↗

## Index of Approved Resolutions:

**No. 2021-01** Resolution in Support of Excluding IT Software and Renewal Costs from the 2% Cap

**No. 2021-02** Resolution in Support of Additional State Funding for Purposes of the Statewide Mandate on Usage of Police Body-Worn Cameras

**No. 2021-03** Resolution in Support of Additional Direct Funding from the State and Federal Government to Municipalities for the Replacement of Lead Service Lines

**No. 2021-04** Calling on State Lawmakers to Take Measures to Enact Comprehensive Reform to the State's Affordable Housing Policy

**No. 2021-05** Resolution Calling on State Action to Mitigate the Effects of Sodium Intrusion

**No. 2021-06** Resolution Calling for the Dedication of 911 Surcharges for Their Intended Purpose

**No. 2021-07** Resolution Supporting Investment in Local Broadband Infrastructure to Equitably and Effectively Bridge the Digital Divide

**No. 2021-08** Resolution Confronting and Combating Antisemitism

**No. 2021-09** Resolution in Support of Family Court Awareness Month

**No. 2021-10** Resolution in Support of Legislation Authorizing the Creation of Civilian Complaint Review Board with Subpoena Power

**No. 2021-11** Resolution in Support of Classifying Emergency Medical Services as an 'Essential Service'

**No. 2021-12** Resolution in Support of the Community Development Block Grant Program

**No. 2021-13** Resolution In Support of Civil Service Act Reform

**No. 2021-14** Resolution Urging the State Legislature to Enact Comprehensive Liquor License Reform

**No. 2021-15** Resolution In Support of Expanding Access to Opioid Treatment Programs

**No. 2021-16** Resolution Urging the New Jersey Legislature to Adopt Legislation to Provide Funding for Preventative Utility Upgrades for the Homeowners of New Jersey

**No. 2021-17** Resolution Proposing Amendments to Proposed Changes to Regulations Concerning Workers' Compensation/Pension Offsets for Accidental Disability Claims

**No. 2021-18** Resolution in Appreciation of NJLM President Janice Kovach

**No. 2021-19** Resolution in Support of Home Rule and Local Autonomy

**No. 2021-20** Resolution Calling on Effort to Address the Backlog of U.S. Army Corp of Engineer Projects

**No. 2021-21** Resolution Supporting Legislation Increasing Local Referendum Signature Requirement to 15% of Latest Gubernatorial Election

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# Governor Murphy's Forward Progress

Managing the end of COVID and moving into the future



Governor Phil Murphy visited the NJLM Conference's League Luncheon to address the attendees. Following are highlights from his speech

## Thanks, President Kovach

*The Governor also thanked Mayor Janice Kovach, president of the League through the pandemic year.*

Thank you, Mayor Janice Kovach...for your leadership on behalf of your fellow mayors and local officials as president of the League of Municipalities over the past year.

So many of the efforts we have undertaken as a state—whether it be continuing to confront the challenges posed by the pandemic, focusing our community investments in the state budget, or our enacting a national model for adult-use marijuana legalization and regulation—required partnership and buy-in from our municipal leaders, and you have been at the forefront on their behalf.

You also have helped lead as a member of the New Jersey Motion Picture and Television Commission, bringing new productions to New Jersey. This industry, in particular, is really taking off. And as a mayor you recognize the benefits these productions bring to our towns—not just in a global close-up but in the direct local economic impact.

For all you have done over the past year and will continue to do, thank you! I know the Town of Clinton will remain in your steady hands.

**A**s I have said many times, the greatest thing about New Jersey is that we may be a patchwork quilt of municipalities—each with its own personality—but that patchwork quilt is really a vivid tapestry.

New Jersey is America, just on a smaller scale. And I know that you often are the first ones to hear from residents—whether they like what we're doing or not. Local government is not the ground floor. It is the nerve center.

I hear them, too, as I travel across and up and down the state. And the past year has presented us all with our share of challenges to work through together, too.

### Relief in many forms

**PANDEMIC:** First, of course, is our ongoing response to the pandemic. And as this is our first time together in person since 2019, allow me to give you all my thanks—and through you to your local health officials, too—for your partnership throughout this entire time.

Our work to set up testing sites in the pandemic's early days, to today as we continue to push forward on a comprehensive vaccination program—which now includes getting our kids vaccinated and our adults boosted—would not have been possible without your partnership.

**Working together and through our partners in the Legislature, we have had—and not even arguably—the most successful efforts to date in providing real property tax relief to our residents.**

I am also particularly proud of our efforts to support our small businesses throughout this time, too. We all know the importance of our small business community in turning a municipality into a community. So far, the Economic Development Authority has put nearly \$700 million into our small business community through direct emergency grants and loans.

And, on top of this, the Department of Community Affairs and the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority have come in with many millions of community-based supports of their own.

Together, these efforts have kept businesses open, and people employed. They have kept our community spirits up through some very dark times. And as our economy continues to recover and bring back jobs, they are going to be at the front of the pack. I have spoken with, literally, hundreds of small business owners over the course of the past 20 months. I hear, firsthand, their commitment to their communities. I

know they share our optimism that we are not only going to beat COVID, but we're going to come back stronger than ever before.

**WEATHER EVENTS:** And, of course, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the devastation that so many of our communities experienced from the storms that swept across our state—Ida and Henri. Two names I know we really don't ever want to hear again.

Working together, the state, counties, municipalities, we were able to deliver the direct federal relief that you as government officials needed to defray the costs you incurred in your responses as well as what your residents needed to clean up and begin to rebuild. And we were able to do it expeditiously.

I thank you for this partnership, as well, that brought real relief to many thousands of residents. As we are working to make New Jersey stronger and fairer we are also making it more affordable for more families and seniors.

**PROPERTY TAXES:** And that is a good transition point to another area in which I am proud of our administration's ongoing work and partnership—in bringing relief to our property taxpayers.

Obviously, I don't need to spend any time dissecting the problem.

But to be clear, working together and through our partners in the Legislature, we have had—and not even arguably—the most successful efforts to date in providing real property tax relief to our residents.

This is not abstract. The budgets our administration has enacted have contributed to three of the lowest year-over-year increases in property taxes on record and the slowest rate of property tax increases of any administration since the start of the millennium.

In just four years, we delivered, though our budgets and fiscally responsible policies, more than \$70 billion in total property tax relief from the state's Property Tax Relief Fund. That means



*Triad Associates congratulates  
Mayor William Pikolycky  
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that over our first term, we've invested more in property tax relief than in any other term in state history. We aren't just talking about it. We're delivering real relief.

Through our restoration of the millionaire's tax—a simple yet significant step in ensuring tax fairness—we delivered more than \$300 million dollars in direct and tangible relief to more than three-quarters-of-a-million middle-class families across the state. I thank the Speaker [Craig Coughlin], specifically, for his advocacy for this relief.

**We are now  
creating economic  
opportunities that  
didn't exist before  
in every corner  
of our state.**

And, more broadly, we have invested \$3 billion more in our public schools across our first four years than the prior administration did across its last.

We all know that public education is the leading driver of property taxes. More than half of the average property tax bill in the state goes to public education.

Investments in public schools tie directly to affordability. Strong public schools are one of the greatest attractors of new residents to our communities. They are also critical to maintaining the investments our families have made in their homes. And these, in turn, stabilizes municipal levies.

So, every dollar we can provide to our school districts is a dollar that they don't have to ask from property taxpayers. And every dollar in home value we can protect in doing so protects property taxpayers from seeing the value of their investment erode.



This principle is also at play in our continued investments in our core infrastructure and in restoring NJ Transit to where we know it can be. It's why we were a cheerleader for the federal bipartisan infrastructure bill and it's why we support the passage of the entirety of the Build Back Better plan, from expanded access to child care to the restoration of the SALT deduction.

Everything points back to making our state more affordable for middle class families, and for everyone.

### **Powering the future**

Just as important in this equation is ensuring strong local economies to power our future.

And in one sense, I mean this literally. One of the reasons we have been so aggressive in becoming a leader in the offshore wind industry is because there was a tremendous void in the manufacturing sector in this country—and we wanted to fill that void.

So today in Paulsboro, an offshore-

wind component manufacturing facility is taking shape. In Salem County, we broke ground in September on the New Jersey Wind Port, which will make our Delaware Bayshore the East Coast logistics hub for the offshore industry.

Combined, we're talking more than 1,500 good jobs in areas of the state where they are needed.

And this is also where our new business incentive program comes into play.

For the first time we have an incentives program that puts small businesses, and the communities they serve, at the top of the mountain. We have an incentive program that is focused on early-stage startup businesses, on innovation, and on entrepreneurship.

We know how local government thrives on innovation and entrepreneurship, too. That's one reason we fought so hard for this new focus—to ensure that our entire state was focused and pointed in the same direction.

Already, we are seeing this program

pay off. Here's what we also saw in September...

The HAX accelerator in Newark is bringing in 2,500 jobs. Party City's new Bergen County headquarters will add and retain another 350 jobs. Fiserv's new Berkeley Heights location will be home to 3,000 jobs, a net gain of 2,000 jobs for our state.

So, one month, 7,500 good jobs. Urban, suburban, and rural. All parts of our state.

Additionally, Kearny and Monmouth County are set to become epicenters of our state's television and film production industry—and earlier this summer the first dedicated new film studio in our state in nearly a century opened its doors.

Earlier today, Mayor Marty Small and I helped break ground on the first supermarket for Atlantic City in 15 years. In one project, we're adding value to a community, we're creating jobs, we're bringing online a critical ratable, and we're working to end this city's

designation as a food desert.

And, also for the first time, we have a state historic preservation tax credit, so you can work with developers on expanding the tax base without having to tear holes in the fabrics of your communities.

So, let's be clear about what this means: we are now creating economic opportunities that didn't exist before in every corner of our state. More opportunities for a good paying job in sectors ranging from manufacturing, to tech, to film, and beyond. Everyone, from young people fresh out of college, to working families, to older employees looking to build a stable retirement, can now benefit from these efforts. And we're only just beginning.

The investments we've made in our public schools, and economic development policies we've pursued are primed to not just help communities smartly grow and redevelop, but they are critical to making our state more affordable.

This is where we have lived every day of the past nearly four years, and it's where we are committed to living every day of the next four that the people of our state have given us.

### Continued partnership

But we cannot be successful on our own. We will continue to partner with each of you, both through the League of Municipalities and individually, on the challenges ahead.

If there's one thing you know about what I want our administration's legacy to be, it's that we didn't believe in top-down, heavy-handed policymaking but rather in collaboration and innovation, in listening and then doing.

Only then can we be sure we're representing all of New Jersey.

Make no doubt, this state is moving forward. I am committed to keep it pointed in this direction. And I look to having you all there by my side. In this, my door is always open. 



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# Today's Action's Define Tomorrow

Lt. Governor Oliver shares insights on state and local cooperation for COVID recovery

*Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver spoke to attendees of the New Jersey League of Municipalities Mayors Box Lunch at the League Conference in November. The following are highlights from her prepared remarks.*

To the mayors and municipal leaders who are here today representing our 565 municipalities—you are the lifeblood of our state. Your steady leadership throughout this pandemic has enabled us to emerge in a strong economic position. Your cooperation with helping Governor Murphy and I focus on public health first and get New Jersey residents vaccinated has enabled our state to move forward.

The impacts of COVID-19 will be felt for decades. But what we do today defines tomorrow. Governor Murphy and I, with the full support at the federal level of our Congressional delegation and the Biden Administration, are making unprecedented investments in our communities and businesses to minimize the long-term financial impacts of this pandemic.

Just this week, a massive infrastructure bill was signed by President Biden that will provide significant investments for New Jersey. Our state is slated to receive approximately \$12 billion in funding from this bill. Over the next 5 years, we will receive funds to help with federal-aid highway apportioned programs, bridge replacements and repairs, and improved public transportation, including our airports. The funds will also be used to improve our water infrastructure to ensure we have clean and safe drinking water,



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expand our electric vehicle charging network and broadband coverage, and protect our state and local governments against cyber attacks. This bill is going to have an enormous impact on our communities. Governor Murphy and I are looking forward to working with you to help implement these major improvements over the coming years.

### Expanded programs

At the Department of Community Affairs, where I serve as Commissioner, we have been busy working with you at the town and county level by implementing and expanding programs to help us emerge from this pandemic stronger.

DCA recently expanded the Neighborhood Preservation and Main Street New Jersey Programs to include additional towns, effectively doubling the size of the programs so we can reach more neighborhoods across the state. These initiatives are designed to help support small businesses and downtown districts in our communities by providing grants and technical guidance to help main streets and small businesses thrive.

DCA's sister agency, the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority, has been assisting small businesses throughout the state through the COVID-19 Small Business Lease Emergency Assistance Program to help businesses in eligible communities who were financially impacted by the pandemic pay their rent. And NJRA and Atlantic City launched a Micro Business program in October to assist small enterprises right here in Atlantic City.

DCA's affiliate, the New Jersey Historic Trust, is continuing to support a record number of historic preservation projects through the Preserve NJ Historic Preservation Fund. This year the Trust received the highest number of applications requesting funding for heritage tourism initiatives, recently approving over \$14 million in grant recommendations from the Preserve New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund. We encourage municipalities to take advantage of these economic development opportunities to preserve historic places and bring heritage tourism to the forefront of your local economies.

Another major initiative that I am very excited about is our recent collaboration with Commissioner LaTourette and his team at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to advance clean energy infrastructure in New Jersey. DCA's Division of Local Planning Services collaborated with DEP to create a statewide Electric Vehicle Municipal Ordinance to encourage electric vehicle charging infrastructure in towns throughout the state. This ordinance makes it easier for towns to install EV charging stations by streamlining the local approval process.

### Sharing services

As many New Jersey municipalities are still feeling the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on local governmental budgets and operations, sharing services between towns has become an increasingly used tool as one way of overcoming these financial challenges. Since Governor Murphy appointed the Shared Services Czars Nicolas Platt and Jordan Glatt in 2018, DCA has received over 2,300 shared services agreements. In October we announced that applications are being accepted for \$10 million in available funding through the Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) to help local governments identify and implement shared services opportunities.

Last month we held a Shared Services symposium with New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts Judge Glenn Grant to discuss a pilot program of regional municipal courts, which will be implemented in Atlantic County in 2022. The pilot is projecting record-breaking savings for all of the municipalities involved.

The sharing of municipal court operations is just one way of overcoming financial challenges. We're encouraging all municipal and county leaders to reach out to our Local Assistance Bureau so we can assist your town in achieving increased fiscal responsibility and taxpayer savings through shared services.

### Eviction and displacement prevention

I also want to briefly talk about the remarkable work that DCA has been engaged in over the past year and a half

to help prevent eviction and displacement of New Jersey residents as a result of the pandemic. In response to this crisis, DCA's Division of Housing and Community Resources stood up the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance program. To date, we have distributed over \$421 million in Emergency Rental Assistance funds to residents in over 47,000 households statewide. In September, a US Treasury report ranked New Jersey first in the nation among state-administered rental assistance programs.

To further prevent evictions in New Jersey, DCA launched the Expanded Access to Counsel and Homelessness Diversion Anti-Eviction Pilot Program in three cities to help low-income households stay in their homes when threatened with or facing eviction.

With the eviction moratorium ending, we are now focusing our outreach to local officials on encouraging people who are in danger of being evicted to make sure that they self-certify with the state. Self-certification is an important step in preventing eviction that we want to make sure residents know about. To self-certify people can visit [COVID19.NJ.GOV/RENTER](https://COVID19.NJ.GOV/RENTER).

### ARP funds

One of the other major operations that DCA has been tasked with is overseeing the \$6.2 billion State Fiscal Recovery Funds grant from the American Rescue Plan. DCA's Division of Disaster Recovery and Mitigation (DRM) is administering, managing, and monitoring each award of funds and disbursing them accordingly. The Division of Recovery and Mitigation is also working to secure a large grant from the Federal Government for recovery efforts that are needed in response to Tropical Storm Ida.

Additionally, DRM administers the Mitigation Assistance Program, which helps residential property owners in flood prone communities elevate their homes to better withstand future flooding disasters.

### Beyond the pandemic

Beyond the pandemic, increasing home ownership is another key initiative that DCA and our affiliate agency the

New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency have been working toward. This year, Governor Murphy created a Wealth Disparity Taskforce to identify and address the various causes and effects of wealth disparities in New Jersey.

I serve on this taskforce and the issue of home ownership recalls the impacts of historic barriers to intergenerational wealth creation, such as redlining and exclusionary lending. To help promote home ownership in New Jersey and to help close the wealth gap, the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency has been providing direct financial support to potential homebuyers who could not achieve homeownership without financial support. The NJHMFA Down Payment Assistance (DPA) program provides \$10,000 in down payment assistance for eligible first-time homebuyers to use as down payment and for closing costs when purchasing a home. 

## Local Success in Atlantic City

Lt. Governor Oliver wrapped up her speech with a specific look at Atlantic City successes from collaborations between the Mayor Marty Small Sr. and Atlantic City officials as well as the State and stakeholders on the Atlantic City Executive Council. She noted:

Together, we are advancing the City with a new grocery store that will break ground tomorrow, a new Medical Arts Pavilion underway, and the expansion of the new Stockton University campus.

Last month, ground was broken on the Wind Training Center at the Atlantic City campus of Atlantic Cape Community College. This is an initiative that will help city residents economically benefit from the offshore wind industry that is developing wind energy off the coast of Atlantic City.

Exciting things are happening in Atlantic City and throughout the state as we move beyond the discussion of rebounding from the pandemic, but rather propelling New Jersey forward. Governor Murphy and I are grateful for this forum to collaborate with you.

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# Working Together

Protecting New Jersey's health through the pandemic and beyond

*Judith Persichilli, Commissioner,  
New Jersey Department of Health*



Judith Persichilli, Commissioner, NJ Department of Health spoke at the State of the State's Health session at the 106<sup>th</sup> Annual League Conference.

New Jersey faces many health challenges—paramount among them has been the COVID-19 pandemic response. The health emergency and other pressing health issues have affected every corner of our state.

New Jersey has come a long way in the response to COVID-19, and the availability of vaccines have allowed us to drive down hospitalizations and case numbers. It is difficult to recall those dark days more than a year and half ago when, over one weekend, our hospitals were challenged with a surge of patients, the worst influx of critically ill patients ever experienced.

Within days our hospitals reached a peak of over 8,300 patients and 2,300 critically ill patients in intensive care. At one point, 97% of those patients were on ventilators. Our frontline healthcare workers were running out of protective equipment with the international supply chain interrupted by the pandemic and national strategic stockpile's shelves were empty due to years of neglect.

Our residents took the steps needed to flatten the curve in our state. New Jerseyans masked up, stayed home, and physically distanced from one another to stop the spread of the virus. And thanks to the dedication of the scientific community, three safe, effective vaccines were developed, which contributed greatly to a decline in cases and deaths.

New Jersey is now among one of the most vaccinated states in the nation. More than 80% of eligible residents have received at least one dose and over 70% are fully vaccinated. The Department is now focused on increasing vaccination

among our younger populations. We are actively working with the Department of Education to solicit and support school-endorsed vaccination events by leveraging relationships with schools, local health departments, community health centers, acute care hospitals, and other vaccine providers. We recognize that parents trust their school communities and will be more likely to visit this child-friendly environment to get their children vaccinated.

New Jersey is also actively promoting booster doses for everyone eligible to receive them. Boosters provide essential additional protection with waning immunity and particularly with the threat from the Delta and other variants.

The Health Department recognizes that carrying out the responsibilities of the COVID-19 response and vaccination effort is an added burden to the strained resources at the local level. Therefore, we have been working to distribute funding as fast as we possibly can to support the work of local leaders and health officials. The Department is in the process of awarding more than \$54 million in funds to reimburse costs, pay for additional staff and cover vaccination-related costs.

As we continue to work to reduce the circulation of COVID-19 in our state, there are other significant health challenges that persist.

**Related health issues**

The Health Department continues to be concerned about an uptick in overdoses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We know this issue affects every municipality in the state. To ensure more data is available to inform programs and policies, the Department recently expanded the New Jersey Overdose Data Dashboard to include up-to-date information about naloxone administrations, substance use treatment

Academy of Pediatrics on approaches to increase lead screening by connecting with the pediatric medical community, preschool services, and families.

The Department's work on Maternal and Infant Health also continues. In September, we released the third New Jersey Report Card of Hospital Maternity Care that includes interactive data on hospital-specific and statewide surgical births, complication rates, and severe maternal birth complications.

While sometimes medically necessary, Cesarean deliveries are associated with elevated risks for hemorrhage, infection, complications from anesthesia, future pregnancy complications, and infant respiratory problems.

However, disparities persist among Black and Hispanic mothers in New Jersey. The rate for these complications was more than double for non-Hispanic Black mothers than non-Hispanic White mothers.

The Department convened the New Jersey Maternity Care Quality Collaborative—a multi-disciplinary stakeholder team that will establish a shared vision and statewide goals for key health services-focused on decreasing maternal deaths, injuries, and racial and ethnic disparities under the umbrella of Nurture NJ. Together, we continue to strive to make childbirth safer for all women in the state.

All of these health issues are impacted by the work done locally. As the state Health Department works to address health threats and promote the overall health of our state, local leaders and local health officials are the boots on the ground carrying our efforts to protect and improve residents' health. 📍

**As we continue to work to reduce the circulation of COVID-19 in our state, there are other significant health challenges that persist.**

admissions, neonatal abstinence syndrome cases, viral hepatitis cases, opioid prescriptions, and drug-related hospital visits. This data can be helpful in planning prevention programs or interventions, evaluating these efforts and supporting grant funding requests and policy-making decisions.

Another ongoing health challenge is addressing childhood lead levels. The COVID-19 public health emergency has impacted the delivery of routine health-care screenings. Both nationally and in New Jersey, the pandemic adversely affected the identification of children with elevated blood lead levels due to the closure of many medical offices, schools, and day care centers in the spring of 2020. Due to the pandemic, lead screening of children less than three years of age decreased by 12%. At the same time, children have spent more time in the home increasing exposure to lead and lead dust. These factors have contributed to fewer children being identified as having an elevated blood lead level.

The Department is partnering with the New Jersey chapter of the American

The report card captures the most updated data available from 2019 and illustrates continued improved Cesarean delivery rates, which dropped from 34.4% to 33.3%.

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# Climate Action Must Become Top Priority for Local Governments

Local leaders can protect their communities, people, and economies from climate threats

Shawn M. LaTourette, *Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection*

Climate change is the single greatest long-term threat to our communities, economies, and way of life in New Jersey. The science is clear: temperatures are increasing, sea levels are rising and extreme weather is becoming more frequent and intense.

As the remnants of Tropical Storm Ida made painfully apparent in September 2021, New Jersey's climate change risks are already manifesting across the state. These risks will only worsen in the years to come, with potentially devastating effects to life, property, and the fabric of our communities. The circumstances demand that we act with concerted urgency to reduce the risks of climate change by drastically cutting our emissions of climate pollutants, and responding to the unavoidable impacts of climate change by planning and building more resilient communities.

## Climate action

The Murphy Administration has made climate action central to building a fairer, stronger, and more resilient New Jersey. And for good reason: the New Jersey-specific climate science demands it. Just last month, the Department of Environmental Protection released studies confirming that the intensity of precipitation in New Jersey has increased 2.5%—to 10%—over

“As the remnants of Tropical Storm Ida made painfully apparent in September 2021, New Jersey's climate change risks are already manifesting across the state.”

the last two decades and will increase by 20% to 50% through the remainder of this century due to climate change. The increases vary regionally within the state, and add significantly to inland flood risk, as we saw with Ida.

While New Jersey continues to experience increases in inland flooding, our coastal areas are at greater risk from sea-level rise and storm surge. In fact, sea levels are increasing at a greater rate in New Jersey than in most other parts of the world. It is likely that sea-level rise will meet or exceed 2.1 feet by 2050 and meet or exceed 5.1 feet by 2100. “Sunny day flooding” will occur more often across the entire coastal area, with Atlantic City experiencing such flooding from exceptionally high tides 95 days a year and with a 50% chance that number could grow to 355 days a year by 2100.

## Local responses

These risks demand urgent action at every level of government. Despite the global nature of climate change, local government leaders can protect their communities, people and economies through their policy, planning and budgetary decisions. Despite the honestly dire science, there is hope when every one of us works to reduce and respond to climate change.



“For New Jersey communities and local government leaders to meaningfully reduce and respond to climate change, we must focus on the long-term growth potential and protection of our communities.”

To lessen worsening climate impacts, local leaders can work within their communities to limit the emissions that continue to fuel climate change. Under Governor Phil Murphy’s leadership, DEP has and will continue to support local governments in achieving emission reductions. In building local policies, municipal and county leaders can look to the Global Warming Response Act 80x50 Report, where DEP details a set of strategies across seven greenhouse gas emission sectors that will, if pursued forcefully and together, reduce emissions by 80% by 2050.

The Murphy Administration’s commitment to providing local governments with policy and technical support is complemented by a commitment to financial support. For example, local governments are eligible for routine grant opportunities from the DEP, the Board of Public Utilities, and the Economic Development Authority to electrify sources of transportation emissions—the largest source of climate pollutants in New Jersey. These grants aid local governments in covering the cost of switching to electric school buses, rapid transit shuttles, garbage trucks, and more.

### Resilience strategies

As we commit our best efforts to reduce emissions, local leaders must also respond to the impacts of climate change that cannot be avoided, like the greater intensity of storms and flooding that many communities experienced in the wake of Ida. The Murphy Administration is steadfast in its support for local governments seeking to build their resilience and adapt to the realities of a changing climate. Through climate

resilience planning and supportive regulatory reform, DEP is helping local governments to face this challenge.

Local leaders can look to the Statewide Climate Resilience Strategy, an iterative planning tool that will be continually updated in the years ahead, and which presents more than 100 actions that can guide local governments and institutions across New Jersey in becoming more resilient. Because every community will experience climate change differently, building resilience starts with individualized assessment and planning.

Again here, the Murphy Administration is providing critical support. Municipal and county governments can rely on the newly released Resilient NJ Local Planning for Climate Change Toolkit that will help local leaders assess climate vulnerabilities, plan and take actions that will protect their communities from climate impacts through sustainable land use planning. Local leaders can also choose to benefit from DEP’s Stormwater Utility Guidance, which supports the creation of

stormwater utilities as a critical tool to help mitigate flooding, improve water quality, and build long-term community resilience.

As local governments take important steps to reduce their climate vulnerabilities, DEP stands ready to provide financial support for climate resilience projects through its Water Bank, Blue Acres, and Watershed Restoration programs, among others.

For New Jersey communities and local government leaders to meaningfully reduce and respond to climate change, we must focus on the long-term growth potential and protection of our communities. We must commit ourselves to actions and investments that will take time to physically show their benefits— just like a warming climate took time to

show us its fury. We must acknowledge that it may not be possible to measure our success in the next budget or on the next ballot. We must have confidence that our success will be measured in the safety, security and resilience we leave our children and the communities they inherit.

Sea levels are increasing at a greater rate in New Jersey than in most other parts of the world. It is likely that sea-level rise will meet or exceed 2.1 feet by 2050 and meet or exceed 5.1 feet by 2100.



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# Ideas for Progress

2021 Innovation in Governance Awards presented



The 2021 Innovation in Governance Awards go to **Mount Olive Township** for the **Combe Fill North Superfund Site Redevelopment–Mount Olive Solar Field Project** and **Robbinsville Township’s Paperless Purchasing Effort**.

The 2021 Honorable Mention is **Holmdel Township** for its **Senior Vaccine Accommodation Program**.

The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities continue to recognize Innovation in Governance through their annual awards program. The awards were presented as part of the Mayors’ Box Lunch on Wednesday, November 17, during the Annual League Conference in Atlantic City.

This award program was established to highlight exemplary local government programs that provide innovative and practical approaches to solving municipal problems and concerns. At the same time, we share these innovative approaches with municipal leaders throughout the state at the Annual New Jersey State League of Municipalities Conference, and through the National League of Cities’ “Best Practices” database.

The 2021 judges were: League Past Presidents Paul Maticera and Plainsboro Mayor Peter Cantu; Division of Local Government Services Jacquelyn Suarez; and New Jersey State League of Municipalities Executive Director Michael Cerra.

The program accepted applications describing any type of innovation undertaken by municipalities in the past 16 months. The participants responded with a range of submissions that underscore the variety of challenges municipalities solve.

## Combe Fill North Superfund Site Redevelopment: Mount Olive Solar Field Project



The Combe Fill North Landfill occupies approximately 65 acres of the 102.15-acre property located at 149 Gold Mine Road, in Mount Olive Township, Morris County.

The site was first operated as a municipal landfill beginning in 1966. Morris County Landfill, Inc., operated the landfill from



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NJSEM is supported by a team of expert energy consultants that prepare the bid packages and evaluate the proposals received from utilities throughout New Jersey who participate in the program.

The NJSEM is governed by a board of local public administrators and officials elected by its members.

*For more information or to become a member visit the NJSEM website.*

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**CHUCK CUCCIA**  
*NJSEM Chair and CFO,  
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## Ideas for Progress

1969 until 1978 at which time it was sold to Combe Fill Corporation (CFC). CFC abandoned the site several years later. The site has been defined as a Contaminated Site and is known as the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Combe Fill North Superfund Site. For many years, the Township struggled with the property, as it caused environmental contamination in the surrounding vicinity and became a tax drain on the Township. In 1990, the Township purchased the tax sale certificate as the property accumulated over \$2.3 million in unpaid taxes. After many years of starts and stops with past developers, the Township was able to auction off the tax sale certificate to a great solar developer, CEP Renewables, to develop one of the largest landfill solar projects in the Eastern United States.

To accomplish this, in 2019 the Township enacted a Redevelopment Plan with the intent of developing the site as a Solar Photovoltaic Energy Facility. Once a Redevelopment Plan was established, the Township took the necessary steps to auction the tax sale certificate to the highest bidder, entered into a purchase agreement with the developer whereby they foreclosed on the landfill property, took ownership, and started the redevelopment process. The transaction will be completed shortly and CEP Renewables will begin construction on a 25.6-megawatt solar project which will transform the former Combe Fill North Landfill Superfund Site into an income generating, clean energy producing asset.

The Mount Olive Solar Field will provide clean power for over 4,000 homes, create new jobs, re-generate tax revenue moving forward of approximately \$50,000 a year and pay back the existing \$2.3 million tax lien which removes a 30-year tax burden, along with improving the quality of the environment of our local community.

While redeveloping a superfund site into a solar field is not a novel idea, the steps the Township took to market and auction the tax sale certificate may be considered innovative. The initial goal was for the Township to acquire the landfill under a tax foreclosure



proceeding and then procure a solar plant developer to lease the landfill from the Township and design, construct, and operate the utility plant. Concurrently, the Township would enter into an Administrative Consent Order with the DEP to outline the terms of the continued operation and maintenance of the site.

Unfortunately, the Township was not able to reach an agreement with the DEP as it imposed too many potential liabilities which was not worth the financial gain of the solar field. A new approach was crafted to hold a special tax sale on the property and allow the developer to use the Abandoned Properties Rehabilitation Act to initiate foreclosure immediately after the tax sale rather than waiting the two-year period otherwise required. This was essential due to the fact that at the same time the State's current Transition Solar Incentive Program, TREC, was taking shape, helped the developer utilize the certainty and stability of the TREC program to help finance the project and refund the Township for all past due taxes attributable to the property. In addition, an Administrative Consent Order was approved by the NJDEP, which ultimately passed on the operation and maintenance responsibilities to the developer, along with reimbursing the NJDEP a substantial amount of money for its remediation costs. Without the cooperation of the NJDEP, this transaction would have not been achievable.

This model on how landfill solar project

can scale and transform contaminated properties to productive lands that deliver sustainable clean energy and improve the quality of life for those living nearby can be duplicated by other municipalities.

## Robbinsville Township - Paperless Purchasing



With the restrictions placed on local governments to retain materials in order to meet legal

requirements, including OPRA, an unintended negative consequence has been the accumulation of paper.

Robbinsville is no different than every other municipality. This is evident by the amount of file cabinets we possess. When that storage reaches capacity, documents go to boxes, then to outside storage locations to make room for more boxes!

None of this is either efficient, nor cost effective.

In Robbinsville, we plan as best as we can and then adjust when faced with obstacles. When COVID-19 reared its ugly head, our response was no different. As a result of restrictions, and health concerns, we needed to adjust on how we provide services to the public. This required a reset on how we operated as a municipality. We converted

to remote working and split shifts fairly quickly, we installed both fixed and removeable bins outside as a way to share documents so they could be received, reviewed and processed safely.

One of the bigger challenges was the purchase order approval process, which required printing several copies and multiple approvals with signatures.

We reached a point that taking it to the next level with a paperless system simply made the most sense. This was a major step and we were keenly aware that it may not be a popular or easy venture for our staff to take on.

Additionally, we were not aware of any other towns actually going to a paperless system. Be that as it may, Robbinsville found itself in a situation where its staff had become extremely efficient at working remotely using the split shifts model within the office. From there, we all started to think about how we could possibly make the transition to paperless. After researching the legalities and contacting Edmunds for its insights,

we realized it was indeed possible.

After research, planning, training, setting and then meeting a goal of July 2021, our process is now entirely electronic.

## We reached a point that taking it to the next level with a paperless system simply made the most sense.

Our software company informed us we are their first New Jersey municipality to accomplish this! By using email, scanning, and electronic approvals with signatures, our entire process—from requisitions to payment approvals—is now paperless. Gone are the days when employees have to spend unnecessary time printing, signing, mailing, filing, and moving paper between departments.

In addition, Robbinsville was able to save money due to cutting the costs of

paper, envelopes, postage, etc. Once the retention period expires on the paper documents we currently have in our storage rooms and file cabinets, those areas will eventually be opened up for a variety of other uses.

Along with the obvious cost savings for materials and temporary employees for filing and archiving impacting our municipal budget, the time saved allows employees to work on other projects and future cost-saving ideas. Our next project is eliminating payment-by-check and compensating all vendors electronically via ACH; another tremendous cost savings in both materials and time.

Not only are we more efficient, with a smaller budget, the feedback we've received from team members has been very positive. Although the transition was difficult at the outset, they ended up enjoying the new process better.

We are very proud to have successfully completed this initiative, and are excited for the future of a paperless Robbinsville Township! 📄

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# Building Healthy Communities

## Opportunities for New Jersey municipalities to promote inclusion of people with disabilities

The New Jersey Inclusive Healthy Communities (IHC) grant program is a new and exciting initiative of the state Department of Human Services Division of Disability Services (DDS) that seeks to advance the inclusion of people with disabilities in building healthy communities at the local, regional and state levels.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that almost one in four New Jersey adults have some type of disability and that people with disabilities suffer greater health disparities including heart disease and diabetes. More and more, Americans are recognizing that people with disabilities experience inequalities in all aspects of life that contribute to health and well-being, including access to employment, affordable and quality health care, healthy housing, education, transportation, and more. There is increasing recognition that as the Ford Foundation recently noted, “to build a world where everyone is equal, we need to recognize how disability interconnects with the issues of social justice and follow the lead of the individuals at the center of the fight.”

### IHC initiative

To address these challenges, the New Jersey Division of Disability Services launched the IHC initiative to empower local and statewide efforts to advance system changes that specifically feature inclusion of people with disabilities. According to Peri Nearon, Executive Director of the DDS, “DHS is thrilled with the response we have received to the IHC grant program where we are supporting major efforts at the community, regional and state levels to really make lasting change that supports the health of people with disabilities.”

Currently in its first grant cycle with 18 grantees working on a range of diverse initiatives, the IHC grant program provides capacity building and implementation grants to municipal and county agencies, as well as non-profit organizations throughout

the state, all focused on promoting inclusive practices that support the health and well-being of individuals with disabilities in the communities where they live.

Grantees are involved in a wide variety of initiatives that focus on:

- Including people with disabilities as part of planning efforts to create healthy communities;
- Implementing lasting strategies that deliver the benefits of healthy communities to people with disabilities; and
- Advancing changes in practices, policies, systems, and the physical environment that prevent people with disabilities from having full access to the conditions that support health and well being.

### Increasing access

The first cohort of IHC grantees are diverse in terms of their organizational missions and IHC initiatives: Grantees are working to increase access for people with disabilities to community gardens and recreational opportunities and nature trails; quality health care including primary, oral and women’s reproductive care; affordable housing and transportation options; and improved preparation for college success.

They are working at the municipal and county level to reexamine local policies and plans to ensure that they are fully inclusive of people with disabilities. They are working to develop training and guidance to ensure that emergency and disaster responders can better understand how to address the needs of

# Opportunity in 2022

Given the enthusiastic response to the first round of IHC capacity building and implementation grants, the Division of Disability Services is currently planning the release of the next IHC Request for Proposals in mid-January 2022.

Municipalities are encouraged to keep an eye out for the RFP in mid-January and sign up for notices from DDS at: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8c2hrv>

@ You can learn more about the IHC program and the work of the current grantees at: <http://eac.rutgers.edu/ihc-grant-program/>

people with disabilities.

IHC grantees are working to build guidance that municipalities can use to be more inclusive of people with disabilities. IHC grantees not only work to advance inclusion of people with disabilities in the places they serve but to ensure that their work contributes to policy and systems change in other New Jersey communities and statewide.

Several municipalities are grantees and other municipalities are working closely with other IHC grantees.

“It’s important that residents who experience disabilities know that their voices matter to the township,” said Evesham Deputy Mayor Heather Cooper. “The more access you can give to all people to participate in a community, the better the whole community is.

## Municipal level

At a recent meeting of 16 of the IHC grantees, grantees shared some of their experiences working at the municipal level. Some talked about the need for greater education and awareness of local officials to make inclusion of people with disabilities a priority. Other grantees discussed the need for local officials to embrace the philosophy that full inclusion of people with disabilities in local policies, planning, and decision-making is a way to improve the health and cohesion of the whole community. Grantees talked about people with disabilities who do not feel welcome to be fully included in local government decision-making processes.

They shared experiences indicating that ensuring inclusion of people with disabilities in local decision-making did not seem to be anyone’s designated “job.” Grantees also talked about the limited awareness on the part of local civic and community leaders that advancing full inclusion of people with disabilities to build healthy communities may start with compliance with the American with Disabilities Act but goes far beyond it. 

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# The Year of Fundamental Reset

*James W. Hughes, University Professor, Dean Emeritus of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University*

February 2022 will mark the second anniversary of the February 2020 start of the worst cyclical economic contraction since the Great Depression. February 2020 also marked the end of a record 120-straight months (February 2010-February 2020) of employment growth. A Goldilocks economy prevailed at the time—not too hot, not too cold, just right. Employment levels had reached all-time highs, unemployment rates had reached 50-year lows, and yet inflation was nowhere to be found. But, unfortunately, we have yet to invent a boom that lasts forever. While expansions are usually murdered by the Federal Reserve sharply increasing interest rates, or by the bursting of economic bubbles, this time the expansion was done in by an unforeseen assassin—COVID-19. Goldilocks quickly unraveled as the global coronavirus pandemic caused a series of convulsive and staggering events.

## Pivoting to growth

In two months (February 2020 to April 2020), New Jersey lost 717,200 jobs, nearly double the gain (+393,400 jobs) of the preceding 10 years. Livelihoods were sacrificed to save lives. But surprisingly, April 2020 marked the technical end of contraction, a determination made by the Business Cycle Dating Committee of the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). Since the recession started in February 2020, its two-month length made it the shortest on record, despite the extraordinary depth of its job losses and human pain.

Pivoting to growth, New Jersey then experienced an employment increase of 488,100 jobs in the 17-month period between

April 2020 and September 2021, which represents a recovery rate of 68.1%. While this lags the national recovery rate (77.6%), it surpassed that (approximately 50%) of New York City. New Jersey was one of the hardest-hit states by the pandemic-driven downturn and New York City was the hardest-hit city. Thus, they both faced longer roads back to full recovery.

Despite its rebound, the state still had an employment deficit of 229,100 jobs as of September 2022, i.e., it needs to add 229,100 jobs to get back to the employment peak of February 2020. However, the emergence of labor force shortages promises to slow the pace of hiring. Help wanted signs abound

throughout the Garden State. This is one of the most vexing economic paradoxes produced by the pandemic—more unfilled job openings than unemployed people. Labor shortages may now be a more permanent part of our economic landscape, perhaps yielding a shift in the power dynamic from employers to employees.

**A signature transformative event of the year 2020 was the shift to remote, out-of-the-office, work-from-home protocols.**

Whatever the labor outcome, the cyclical economic upswing currently underway will be two-years old in April 2022. But it will undoubtedly continue to encounter uncertainties and headwinds, such as coronavirus variants, lagging vaccinations, labor shortages, continued supply-chain disruptions, product and material shortages, energy price surges, and the persistence of elevated inflation. Such potential speedbumps are not unusual. They are always present, even during long expansionary periods.

**Evolving workplace**

The pandemic has also fundamentally upended the world of work, the basic functioning and structure of the office market, and the workplace. It is undoubtedly a watershed moment. Will the pandemic-driven distress in office markets match the e-commerce-driven distress of bricks and mortar retailing? The coronavirus shock revealed that many pre-COVID offices were being

run as relics of the 20th century, despite massive advances in mobile information technology. But the dinosaur is being forced to evolve and work redefined.

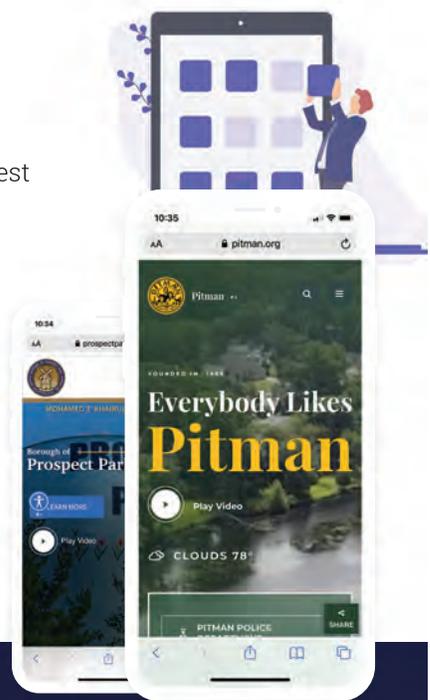
It is now recognized that, in many cases, work is more of an activity rather than a physical place. Much white-collar work has been decoupled from the physical presence in the office. In fact,

a signature transformative event of the year 2020 was the shift to remote, out-of-the-office, work-from-home protocols. What emerged was a new pandemic-inspired acronym—WFH (work from home).

This could rank as one of the great office-market disrupters of all time. Suffice it to say, a significant rethink of

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## Year of Fundamental Reset

the entire office and work ecosystem is taking place, and a range of different hybrid work models and agile distributed office networks is now being tested. The narrative of 2022 may well be the balanced resolution between WFH and two new acronyms: RTO (return to office), and WNH (work near home, i.e., satellite office suites).

An additional rethink of the work process is the blind acceptance of long commutes guided by rigid 9-to-5 schedules. The ritual of commuting five days per week to centralized headquarters offices simply to be crammed cheek by jowl in a sea of workstations may be an endangered species.

**While the expansion will continue in 2022, there is a fundamental reset underway—a reset in the way we live, work, shop, and play.**

It is likely that 2022 may well be the year of the fundamental reset for many organizations. The shelf life of many pre-pandemic assumptions and certainties has expired. COVID-19 is turning out to be a transformational long-term disruption that requires organizations to hit the reset button—a reexamination of the fundamentals of work, workforce, and workplace. Municipal governments are no exception.

Demographic change is far less volatile than economic change, but it can be equally transformative. While COVID-19 was unable to alter generational aging, it did accelerate changes in generational behavior, lifestyle preferences, and decision making. The most visible demographic disruption post-February 2020 was the acceleration of heretofore



## Hyper changes

Beyond cyclical swings, pandemic shocks have shaken our economic foundations and are reshaping the state and nation. So, what lies ahead? Most significantly, COVID-19 has already expedited the future, acting as a “gasoline on the fire” accelerant. It has vastly increased the pace of structural change already underway, such as accelerating remote work practices, accelerating the surge in e-commerce, accelerating the bricks and mortar retail meltdown, accelerating the voluntary quitting of jobs (recently labeled the Great Resignation), accelerating millennial suburbanization, accelerating baby-boom retirements, and accelerating the importance of Gen Z, the new entry-level workforce. Embedded change in each of these areas has been transformed into hyper-change.

For example, because of online shopping growth, bricks and mortar retail carnage had long been underway. But what had been anticipated as a multi-year meltdown was compressed into a matter of months. As clicks increasingly replaced bricks, the state’s economic landscape continued to add massive fulfillment centers (i.e., warehouses) at an accelerating pace. In many areas, obsolete office buildings and shopping centers are being leveled and the sites converted to fulfillment centers, as are urban industrial brownfields and suburban greenfields. (As an aside, what could sound more virtuous than a “fulfillment center?” It suggests happiness delivered—just what New Jersey’s consumers ordered.)

Now there is a complimentary phenomenon spurred on by the pandemic. To speed up the delivery of happiness, to New Jersey consumers, e-commerce is producing smaller last mile delivery stations (mini warehouses), whose favored locations are vacant retail properties. This portends another major commercial land use transformation. Delivery speed is of the essence and a new consumer ecosystem is rapidly evolving.

While online sales will certainly grow, offline sales will not face extinction. Shoppers will not abandon in-store purchases. Omnichannel retailing—mixing digital and in-store experiences—will continue to advance. Even Amazon will be expanding its physical store footprint. But the continued growth of e-commerce’s market share appears inexorable.

**EXIT**



urban-centric millennials or Gen Y (the supersized “digital” generation born between 1981 and 1996) into the suburban housing arena. Pre-pandemic, they had already entered the family-raising stage of the life cycle but belatedly and tepidly had just begun their suburban odyssey. Many had been sitting on the decision-making fence, but the pandemic pushed many of them off

the fence, speeding up their move to the suburbs. As a result, suburban single-family housing demand surged. Consider this the revenge of New Jersey’s suburbs, which had seemingly fallen out of favor in the 2010s, because of “sprawl withdrawal” millennial movements—exiting the suburbs and heading to urban-centric 24-7 live-work-play (LWP) environments.

Another visible example of COVID-19 affecting generational behavior concerns the retirement of baby boomers (members of the colossal post-World War II generation born between 1946 and 1964). Pre-pandemic, 13 baby boomers per hour retired in New Jersey—over 300 per day! But COVID-19 has caused many boomers to accelerate their departure from the workforce and topline leadership positions. Retirement plans have been rescripted, adding to the problems of labor shortfalls and unfilled jobs. Succession planning and retaining retiring boomer knowledge and institu-

tional memory are critical issues for all organizations.

Concurrently, Gen Z (born between 1997 and 2012) is the mobile internet’s first generation. It is now serving as the replacement demographic cohort for family-raising millennials exiting LWP environments. Gen Z also constitutes the new entry level workforce and the source of desperately needed new digital talent. All organizations must be prepared to repeat the labor market adjustments and disruptions that accompanied the coming of age of millennials.

Overarching these fundamental demographic shifts will be the continued search for easier and more affordable lives by all demographic sectors. Thus, while the expansion will continue in 2022, there is a fundamental reset underway—a reset in the way we live, work, shop, and play. Technological and economic mega-forces have been unleashed and the future will be defined by the adaptation to them. **§**

**Year of Fundamental Reset**

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## Clerk's Duties When Reviewing Petitions for Referendum

### What duties do clerks have when reviewing a submitted petition for referendum?

 The clerk plays an important role whenever a petition for referendum is submitted. First and foremost, it is the clerk's duty to determine whether or not a petition for referendum meets legal requirements in its form. Thus, the clerk must ensure that each paper of the petition has a proper statement of the circulator, and determine whether or not the petition is signed by a sufficient number of qualified voters.

Petition papers circulated for the purposes of a referendum must:

1. Be uniform in size and style.
2. Contain the full text of any proposed ordinance.
3. Each paper must include the names and addresses of the five voters designated as the Committee of the Petitioner.

Signatures must appear legible and in ink or indelible pencil, they must be only of voters registered in the municipality in which the petition is filed, and the signatures must be accompanied by the voter's home address. Signatures do not need to appear on one sheet but each sheet of signatures must have attached to it an affidavit from the signature gatherer attesting:

1. That the petition was personally brought around by the signature gatherer.
2. That each voter signed the petition in front of them.
3. That each signature is believed to be the genuine signature of the person the signer claimed to be.

Before moving on to determine the validity of the signatures the clerk should first determine the minimum number of signatures required. Under New Jersey law a petition for referendum must be signed by a number of legal voters equal to at least 15% of the total votes cast in the municipality at the last election in which members of the General Assembly were elected. Only after determining that the threshold number of signatures has presumably been obtained should the clerk move on to address the validity of the signatures.

When it comes to determining whether the petition is signed by a sufficient number of qualified voters, there is no statutory directive as to the method or means to be utilized by a clerk in order to arrive at such a determination. Courts however, have recognized that a clerk has the discretionary power to adopt any rational means of performing this duty. [See, *D'Ascensio v. Benjamin*, 142 N.J. Super. 52, 55 (App. Div. 1976)]

It should be noted that when examining signatures, there is no requirement that the signature on the petition be identical with that appearing on the voter registration records. Moderate deviations or inconsistencies between the two signatures are unavoidable and does not automatically deem the petition signature invalid. The clerk must use their administrative discretion in reviewing signatures for authenticity, but there is a presumption that the signatures are authentic and only when there is a significant variance between signatures should their genuineness be called into question.

A recent decision from the Appellate Division would also appear to take the position that disqualifying a signature as invalid should only be done after careful consideration and after a reasonable attempt to obtain confirmation from the signer of their intent to sign. [See, *Twp. Of Montclair Committee of Petitioners v. Twp. Of Montclair*, Docket No. A-2315-20 (App. Div. Nov. 30, 2021)]

The clerk, of course, must remain mindful that all of this must be done within strict statutory timeframes. Once submitted, the clerk has 20 days to examine the filed petition to see if it fulfills all of the requirements. If the petition meets the requirements the clerk must "certify" the petition and submit a certificate of their findings to the governing body at their next scheduled meeting.

Should the clerk make the determination that any one of the requirements have not been met, such as an insufficient number of signatures or failure to include a signed affidavit by the signature collector, the clerk is required by law to immediately communicate these details to the petitioners. The petitioners then have 10 days to cure any defects and return a supplementary petition to the clerk.

Once returned, the clerk has only five days to review the amendments. If at this point the petition is once again rejected, the clerk must immediately let the petitioners know of the reasons. Once rejected for the second time no further action can be made and the petitioners must begin the process anew. 

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# Gold Dome



Ben Dworkin, Ph.D., *Director, Rowan University Institute for Public Policy & Citizenship (RIPPAC)*

## Anticipating Murphy's Second Term, and Beyond

“A win is a win,” we are often told when elections are closer than people expected. The reelection of Democrat Governor Phil Murphy over Republican challenger Jack Ciattarelli certainly falls into this category. Though the final result was not nearly as close as many imagined on election night, the margin was still smaller than much of the public polling had predicted.

A key question now is: how will the election results shape the next four years of the Murphy administration?

For his part, Murphy has been rather vague on what a second term would look like. The campaign was filled with references to “moving forward” with little detail as to what that meant.

There are three possible directions as to what might happen next.

**Doubling Down.** Some think that the governor, fresh off his reelection, will make a strong push for an aggressive, progressive agenda. His first term, they argue, was just the opening act. The next four years offer the opportunity to make even more substantive changes on equity issues; that is, expanded efforts to assist those who are most vulnerable in society due to inadequate education or income and/or the legacy of discrimination and systemic bias.

**Restrained Progressivism.** The most explicit promise Murphy made in the campaign was that he would not raise taxes in a second term. Given that his liberal base is a community that, by and large, believes in the value of strong, progressive taxation, this took many in Trenton by surprise.

If he is to be believed, Murphy will have few new resources for any large second-term initiatives. Economic growth and the remaining \$4 billion in federal pandemic relief funding will have to be enough support to maintain current programs.

**Taxpayer Affordability.** While Democrats kept control of the state legislature, they suffered a net loss of six seats in the Assembly and one in the Senate. As a result, more than a few members are skittish about continuing to support the governor's

agenda, especially because he is a lame duck. While Murphy is unable to run again, they face the voters in two short years. The legislative branch is therefore likely to push Murphy to refocus on “kitchen table” issues, so as to make New Jersey more affordable for the middle class.

What comes next for the Murphy administration and New Jersey will probably draw a bit from all three.

Murphy is not changing his stripes. He proudly wears his title as “the most progressive governor in America.” His priorities will remain, including free college education, full pension payments, social justice reform, and an emphasis on making the overall system of taxation and government services more equitable.

For Murphy's progressive political base, just because there aren't going to be “new” taxes doesn't mean that the current tax code can't be “adjusted”—reducing rates for some, raising them for others—to generate new revenue. They also want to see changes that will make it easier for those eligible for tax breaks to access the benefits.

Murphy's team recognizes that individual pieces of the mainstream progressive agenda are quite popular and they see no reason to avoid pursuing them. Up first will be a new child care tax credit, to be followed possibly by a “per child” tax credit initiative, similar to what the federal government does.

The governor is also likely to focus on other widely favored policy ideas, like gun control and reduced prescription drug pricing, and to reengage the legislature on long-stalled bills to protect and enhance access to reproductive health care and to issue “baby bonds” for every child born in the state to use later in life.

### The Requirements.

Of course, regardless of the Murphy agenda, there will be things that he will have to do in a second term.

For example, the state Supreme Court is widely expected to rule that New Jersey must put additional money into new school construction for the poorest districts. The politics of finding the votes in Trenton to authorize that funding will make the overall price tag go up as legislators will probably demand additional funding for their own districts in exchange for supporting the court-mandated spending.

New Jersey's Transportation Trust Fund (TTF), the state's primary vehicle for building and maintaining roads and bridges, is likely to need reauthorization as early as 2024. The last time New Jersey faced such a deadline, the result was a months-long dysfunctional shutdown more reminiscent of Washington than Trenton. Murphy will certainly want to avoid that kind of standoff.

### The X Factors.

Finally, there are a few unknown factors that will shape the governor's next four years in Trenton.

In particular, three of the four legislative leaders are going to be new come January. The Republican minorities will be led by state Senator Steve Oroho and Assemblyman John DiMaio. GOP victories in November and the ongoing legislative redistricting process have given Republicans renewed hope that majority status will be within reach before Murphy's second term is done.

Perhaps the most shocking result of election night was the loss of Steve Sweeney, who has served as Senate President for a record 12 years, to Republican Edward Durr, who ran a small and underfunded campaign.

The impact of Sweeney's removal from Trenton cannot be understated. He managed his majority caucus with a velvet fist, finding the right moments to be either ingratiating or tough. It's not an easy task. Given his past gubernatorial ambitions, Sweeney had a wide-ranging policy agenda and left his mark on any number of areas, especially support for the physically and mentally challenged, pension and health benefit reforms, and economic development in the southern part of the state.

His replacement, state Senator Nicholas Scutari, is less of a known quantity, though certainly sharp enough to handle the task.

An additional "X factor" will be COVID. If new variants cannot be handled by existing vaccinations and boosters, then new restrictive measures are likely. The unknown challenges facing public health over the next few years may offer the best explanation as to why the Murphy administration is

still sitting on nearly \$4 billion in federal COVID relief funding, despite the clamoring from a wide variety of New Jerseyans to spend it now to alleviate current suffering.

This pressure ratcheted up as the 2021 gubernatorial race grew tighter in the final weeks, when the political need for

and benefits of allocating the money seemed obvious.

But, "a win is a win."

Moving forward, what the Murphy administration determines are the lessons from the election may well shape New Jersey far beyond the next four years. 🇯🇵

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Joseph M. Hannon, Esq.,  
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## State Moves Forward with Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives

Recently, the State has moved forward on diversity issues on a few fronts that will affect municipalities. On September 28, 2021, the State Office of Diversity and Inclusion was created by Executive Order 265. This office is part of the Department of Treasury and the Chief Diversity Officer is the head of the office. In addition, recent legislation has been enacted with a goal of ensuring greater diversity in our State's police departments. All municipalities will need to be familiar with these provisions and comply with their requirements.

The expectation of the State Office of Diversity and Inclusion is to develop a high-level accountability structure to support the work toward improving diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in the state by conducting assessments of such policies, monitoring the progress of those policies, and supporting the development of new policies. The office will also provide direction and guidance to diversity officers and offices within the executive branch of state government, and, to the extent practicable, to diversity officers and offices of nongovernmental entities receiving state funds. The office will also oversee the placement of anti-discrimination statements and goals in public policy or guidance documents issued by state agencies. It will develop recommendations for the formation of policies that support diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in non-governmental entities. The office will establish a strategic plan for measurable outcomes in implementation and growth in all areas of inclusion.

One area where the state will look to make inroads in diversity and inclusion is in law enforcement. Through the Civil Service Commission, but not limited to Civil Service municipalities, programs will be developed to analyze the racial composition in law enforcement agencies. The goal will be to identify "agencies that might benefit most from eliminating any preference in hiring based upon residency." This would apply to all counties and municipalities. This analysis will include, but is not limited to, the racial composition of each department. Municipalities will be required to submit information concerning the racial and ethnic backgrounds of their

departments and respond to inquiries related to these issues. It will study the salaries of each department, including variances based on geography and socioeconomic factors as well as the impact of residency requirements on diversity.

In low-income communities, as defined by law, the Civil Service Commission will have a program to sponsor preparation courses for individuals to enter the law enforcement profession. As stated in the law, the purpose will be "providing, securing, or identifying scholarships for alternative route programs or preparatory courses for the entry level law enforcement examination for residents of any low-income community or of any municipality in this state with at least one 'qualified opportunity zone.'" This will be accomplished through grants, gifts, or other financial assistance. Regulations will be promulgated on this issue.

In order to enact these initiatives, S-2766 was passed to enable the Civil Service Commission to establish a mentoring program for applicants. This mentoring program is for applicants "who reside in a municipality with a median income at or below 250% of the federal poverty level. The program shall be expanded to minority applicants if the results of a properly conducted disparity study demonstrate particularized findings of past discrimination and the program is narrowly tailored to remedy that past discrimination."

The purpose is to help address obstacles unique to the individuals' situations. Such assistance may include workshops, group discussions, and dissemination of information about civil service practices that provide assistance in overcoming barriers to employment. It is designed to provide a mentor to an applicant for the duration of the exam cycle until the mentee completes the hiring process. The intent is for the mentor and mentee to be of the same racial or ethnic background.

Also, S-2767 was enacted, which is a database to collect/track background information on candidates. The goal is to develop a universal background application for all police applicants. This information is to be provided by all law enforcement agencies and not just those subject to civil service.

The expectation on municipalities is clear: to work within the confines of recent legislation for law enforcement and support diversity initiatives. Municipalities will need to comply and stay apprised of regulations that further explain the recently enacted legislation. 🦋



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- Clarence Anthony,  
CEO, National League of Cities



“(In Tucson) the permitting process was taking four weeks. Now with SolarAPP+ we we give a permit the same day. We just approved about 450 installations in the last 60 days alone that we have been using SolarAPP+ in the city of Tucson and because time is money. For the city of Tucson we can charge less for the permit. So what that means is that it becomes less expensive for the installation and we make solar much more available to communities... to low income communities in our city.”



- Tucson Mayor  
Regina Romero



“We were the first to adopt SolarAPP+ and issue a permit through SolarAPP+ and just issued our 30th permit through SolarAPP+. With all the building we’ve done, there have been no issues.”



- Pleasant Hill Mayor  
Sue Noak

# Cut through green tape with SolarAPP+

An online portal that streamlines permitting at the local level.



## One More New Year's Resolution: For New Jersey Municipal Administrations

**A**t the beginning of the year, we come up with new resolutions. “I’m going to lose 10 pounds.” “I promise to hit the gym every morning!” Unfortunately, we (or at least I) seldom accomplish these laudable resolutions.

But there are resolutions that we as local government officials should seriously consider. Over the years, I’ve tried to take this time when the weather is bad, there’s no place to go, and it’s quiet in the office to work on the following issues that are unique to administrations.

Of course, the most important concern at this time is work on the municipal budget and the annual reorganization with the myriad resolutions that need adoption. For some of us, we’re lucky enough to have wonderful municipal clerks and financial staffs who have these tasks in hand. Amid all this beginning-of-the-year activity, I suggest some new New Year’s resolutions for the next few months.

### Personnel Manual

Most municipalities have some form of a personnel manual. Many communities belong to Joint Insurance Funds. Usually, they provide model policies and procedures (PPM). This is a good time to take a few hours to review those policies to make sure that they are up to date and are being followed. Unfortunately, it’s all too common to have the PPM adopted and put on the shelf.

In my experience, I have noticed that when the PPM is adopted, it’s not fully

adopted as per New Jersey rules. So, here are some basic structural suggestions and the procedures that you should go through to ensure they will hold up if ever challenged.

**First**, collectively bargained agreements (CBA) take priority over a PPM. Where the CBA is silent, then the PPM is the policy.

**Second**, the PPM should be written as a series of individual policies and given unique identifying numbers. When you adopt new or amended policies, the manual can easily be updated. Each policy stands on its own, but all are included in one manual. Below is a suggested illustration of how each policy could be organized for easy reference and indexing.

TOWNSHIP OF BLOOMFIELD  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

POLICY NUMBER: 2020-01

Township Electronic Equipment Policy

Council Review: (Insert Date)

Union Review: (Insert Date due date for the unions to respond)

Final Adoption: (Insert resolution adoption date)

Purpose

This policy addresses the actions that must be taken by all employees who have been issued electronic equipment by the Township. This equipment is Township property and includes, but is not limited to: cellphones, tablets, laptops etc.

General Policy

Any Township issued equipment is intended for business use only. Employees are responsible for the physical security of any Township equipment issued to them.

**Third**, once you are satisfied that your policies are up to date, you need to make sure that the entire document and any amendments are adopted properly. I have found this step has not been completed properly. So, when you start the process of review, make sure that each policy, either the original full document or any amendments, are adopted in this manner.

1. Review the policy and procedure with governing body.
2. Send the policy to the unions for comment. Give them a specific date to return any comments. Make sure you keep a written record of this process, it is the one most overlooked. If the union has comments, and if you agree with them, amend the policy accordingly.
3. Finalize the policy and have it adopted by resolution of the governing body. Lastly, distribute the policy and have all the affected employees acknowledge receipt. Now you have a properly and legally adopted policy that can be enforced when necessary.

**Personnel Chart**

January is a good time to review your organizational charts. While this is not a requirement, having an organizational chart that is up to date, is a good practice. It should illustrate the hierarchy with each position, title, employee name, and salary. During the year, employees are moved based on need, and the organizational chart is then no longer accurate. I also included the updated charts in my budget documents to the governing body.

**Training**

These days, providing training for your employees has become easier with the numerous online training options available to you. This is the time to plan the training for the first half of the year. There are a few training programs that are required that I recommend you include in your training plan.

Harassment training, which includes sexual harassment and bullying, is a mandatory annual training requirement for every municipal employee. There are several online outlets for this training, but consider in-person training.

**Amid all this beginning-of-the-year activity, I suggest some new New Year’s resolutions for the next few months.**

Gathering employees together through a few sessions to review not only this

training, but any personnel policies that you may have adopted, is beneficial.

Other training that you might want to consider is use of medical leave, specifically the requirements of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and include the NJ Family Medical Leave Act. These two laws are similar but do vary. Make sure you explain the difference and how these two benefits are used properly. Obviously, you should have your policy on FMLA/NJ FLA up to date and adopted.

I hope you find these New Year’s resolutions helpful to you as you manage your personnel. The NJ League of Municipalities Labor Advisory Service does provide the opportunity for you to reach out to me for any clarification or questions. 📧

@ To speak with him about the NLJM Labor Advisory Service, email Matt@njcs.us



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## Where Have All the CFOs Gone?

There is a dearth of qualified Certified Municipal Finance Officers (CMFO) right now in the State of NJ. Just ask any administrator who has recently tried to fill that position, whether part time or full time.

The reasons for that are many. When the current certification program was enacted back in 1991, there was an existing law from 1972 (P.L. 1971). Under the old law (chp. 413) those of us who were working in the municipal finance field at the time signed up for the five classes (now there are eight).

**The initial wave of CMFOs was most likely upwards of 700. There were 567 towns and 21 counties and the days of working multiple jobs had not yet begun.**

If you passed all five classes, you were a CMFO. At that time there was no state administered exam as there is now. If you know a CMFO with a license that begins with the letter O, then they were granted the CMFO status before the exams started. Those who had to sit for the exam have the letter N before their license number. O for old, N for new. I am O-57. Hold the jokes, please.



### Changing Law

The 1991 law required all municipalities to appoint a Chief Financial Officer who had a CMFO certificate (O or N). The law granted the CMFO status to individuals who worked for towns in a related financial capacity such as the treasurer, comptroller, deputy CFO, etc.

Until 1991, the classes were just as arduous as they are now, but there were only five and no DLGS exam. Many finance office staffers took advantage of the law knowing that the license would come in handy. The appointment of a CMFO as the CFO brought with it job stability and possible tenure in a well-paying job with a good pension and benefits. This applied to full- or part-time CFOs.

The initial wave of CMFOs was most likely upwards of 700. There were 567 towns and 21 counties and the days of working multiple jobs had not yet begun.

For most of the 1990s and 2000s the CMFO/CFOs stayed in place, maybe moving once or twice; often starting in a deputy role and then moving to their own CFO position or from a smaller community to a larger one. Again, the prospect of tenure and lifetime health benefits was a strong allure to stay in one town.

**Fast Forward**

Fast forward to the last five years and many of my generation of CFOs are now retiring (as I did more than 2 years ago). We don't all go away, many of us move into private practice as consultants. In addition, and perhaps more consequentially, the pension reforms of 2011 prevented any public employee from gaining pension credit for part-time employment. You could still take a part-time job in addition to your full-time job, but it was not pensionable. That drove the price of part-time work up for the municipality to make the position more desirable.

I have helped many CFOs get appointments in the past several years. I have also spoken to many administrators and it's proven to be that the qualified choices to fill vacancies are very slim. Depending on local circumstances, tenured CFOs do not often plan on leaving their positions.

The political theatre in many towns is a turn off. The staffing of the finance offices is another. In mid- to large-sized towns, a qualified CFO should not be expected to do all day-to-day administrative support work. A good CFO will manage not only the financial responsibilities of the town but also, depending upon the organizational structure of the municipality, the staff from treasury, tax collection, payroll, tax assessment, and purchasing. The CFO law includes a list of responsibilities for the position.

Some other observations in closing. We have learned in the past 18 months that some financial operations can be done through remote work. This may

help potential candidates in their decision should you offer them a position, especially in a part-time environment. That should also be a subject of the interview.

Although a topic for another day, try as best you can to have a succession plan for the CFO. If possible, identify

current staff that have the potential to be your next CFO. Pay for them to take the classes. It will pay off in the long run.

Next month, we'll review some pointers for creating a job listing and filling a CFO position with specific examples. 📌

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# 2021 NJLM Conference: Legacies Created!

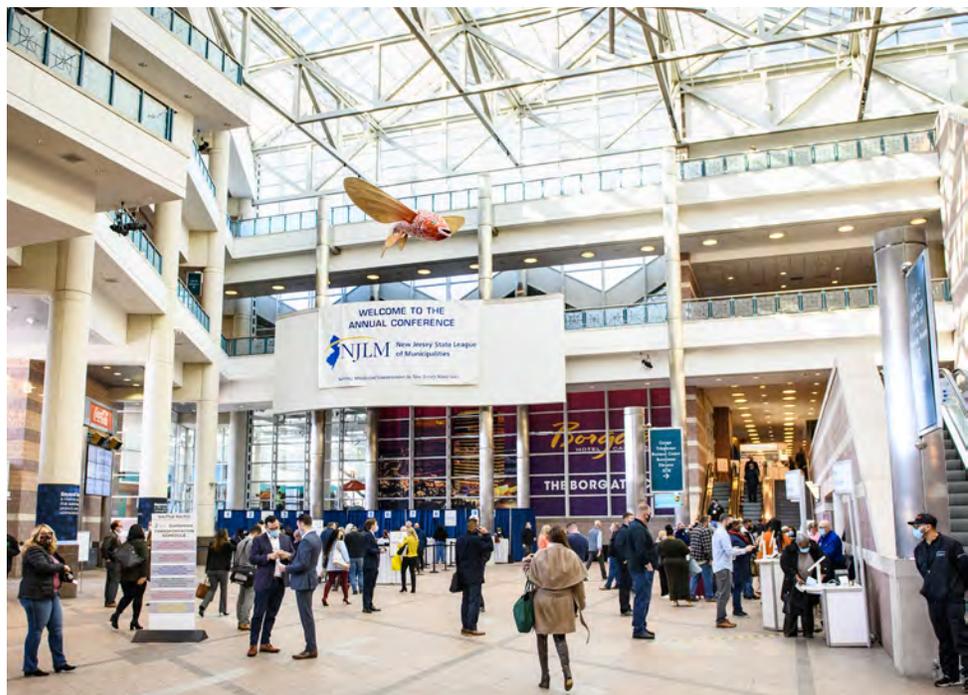
Creating  
Your  
Legacy

2021

NJLM Conference  
106<sup>th</sup> Annual • Atlantic City  
November 16-18 #njleague

Looking back, the 2021 NJLM Conference might be remembered as the one with the masks, but it will also be remembered as a very happy homecoming for all attendees, exhibitors, and participants. While the 2020 virtual conference was a successful stopgap through pandemic challenges, the in-person event was a welcome return to normalcy with events, exhibits, and education options for municipal officials and their partners in government and business.

The following is a rundown of the event.



Screening central, crowds moved cooperatively through the vaccination review area and into registration. Traffic was brisk and attendees enjoyed the opportunity to interact with each other as well as vendors on the exhibit floor.

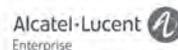


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# Tuesday

The day kicked off with an Orientation featuring League officials and moved into a wide variety of events including the Sustainable Jersey Awards Luncheon and many opportunities to visit with exhibitors in the expanded time between sessions in the reconfigured exhibit hall.



Then NJLM President Mayor Janice Kovach welcomes attendees to the conference at the Orientation session.



NJLM retirees previous Executive Director Michael J. Darcy and former Senior Legislative Analyst Jon Moran were recognized for their dedicated service to the League.



Piscataway Mayor and NJLM Past President speaks at the League Resolutions Committee meeting.

**1** At the session Economic Recovery Post COVID session, NJLM President Mayor Janice Kovach; Tom Bracken, President, NJ Chamber of Commerce; Anthony Russo, President, NJ Commerce and Industry Association; and Michele Siekerka, President and CEO, NJ Business and Industry Association. **2** Republican Minority Leader Jon Bramnick shares strategies for managing government life with a sense of humor. **3** Courtenay Mercer, Executive Director of Downtown New Jersey speaks at Small Downtowns Can Do Economic Development, too.



The League was key for a lot of our communities to get the resources that they needed to be able to know where they needed to go and who they needed to talk to. I can't stress enough, they are there for you.

*Mayor Janice Kovach, then-President, NJLM*



**4** Moderator Mayor John Ducey of Brick looks on while Division of Local Government Services Director Jacquelyn Suarez provides an update. **5** Mary Cruz, Chief of Staff for the Office of Congressman Donald Norcross is joined by Rob Zucker, Partner at Winning Strategies Washington, and moderator Mayor Brian Whaler of Piscataway, NJLM Past President, at the Federal Issues–American Rescue Plan and Infrastructure session. **6** New Jersey Clean Communities Council Executive Director JoAnn Gemenden discusses the plastic bag law. **7** NJ State Archives were in the spotlight in a session featuring NJ State Archives Executive Director Joseph Klett.

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# Wednesday

Wednesday is always the busiest day at the League Conference, and this year was no exception. The exhibit floor was full as were exhibitor learning sessions along with education sessions. Midday was marked with a highly anticipated Mayors Box Lunch where the winners of the Innovation in Governance Award, Mount Olive and Robbinsville, were recognized; the new class of Mayors Hall of Fame were inducted (see story page 18); and Lt. Governor/DCA Commissioner Sheila Oliver; NJ Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn LaTourette; and Acting NJ Attorney General Andrew J. Bruck spoke with attendees. In the evening, the Women in Municipal Government celebrated its Awards and Networking Event where Secretary of State Tahesha Way accepted an award on behalf of the Suffragists and retired Newark Council President Mildred Crump and retiring Senator Loretta Weinberg were honored.



**1** Executive Board Member Mayor Gary Passanante of Somerdale moderates the Small Cells in the ROW: Challenges and Benefits session with Ken Fellman, Of Counsel, Helmer, Conley and Kasselman; Jerry Kirshman of Civitas Networks; Senator Declan O'Scanlon; and Dominic Villecco, President, NJ Wireless Association (not pictured). **2** Newark Mayor Ras Baraka addresses the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association flanked by Mayor Adrian Mapp of Plainfield; Assemblywoman Angela McKnight; Mayor Dahlia Vertreese of Hillside, and Mayor Andre Sayegh of Paterson (not pictured). **3** The Legislative Leadership answered the question: What's Next in Trenton in a session moderated by NJLM 2nd Vice President Ray Heck of Millstone with speakers Assembly Republican Leader Jon Bramnick; Senator Troy Singleton; Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin; and Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean. **4** NJLM Deputy General Counsel Trishka Waterbury Cecil and moderator Mayor Keith Kazmark of Woodland Park discuss ethics, OPRA, OPMA, and Civility at the Elected Officials Primer. **5** NJ Department of Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli addresses the state of the state's health with moderator Mayor Jaclyn Veasy of Evesham, NJACCHO President Marconi Gapas, Health Officer Union Township; and NJ Local Boards of Health President Christine Harris.

**Top to bottom:** The Innovation in Governance Awards presented by NLC's Anthony Santiago, and Lt. Gov. Sheila Oliver to Mt. Olive and Robbinsville; Secretary of State Tahesha Way speaks at the Women in Municipal Government Networking and Awards event on behalf of suffragists. Then NJLM Vice President William Pikolycky of Woodbine moderates the panel discussion at the Mayors Box Luncheon. Lt. Gov. Oliver welcomes NJLM Hall of Fame members.



America is different than it used to be. It's larger, it has more colors, it has more languages...all those things are different, and we have to start being different in terms of how we dole out money and how we dole out resources.

*Mayor Dwayne Warren, Orange City*



**6** Moderator Trenton Mayor Reed Gusciora along with Eagleton Institute of Politics Director John Farmer; Miller Center for Community Protection and Resilience Associate Director Ava Majlesi, and John “Jack” Donohue, COO of the Network Contagion Research Institute gather for the Eagleton Holland Ethics session. **7** Atlantic City Mayor and NJLM Executive Board Member Marty Small Sr. discusses urban funding with Paterson Mayor Andre Sayegh and Orange City Mayor Dwayne Warren. **8** NJLM Past President Mayor J. Christian Bollwage of Elizabeth discusses Urban Enterprise Zones. **9** An audience member addressing the panelists at a session.

# Budgeting for the Elected Official:

## Everything you Need to Know to Create, Balance, and Approve Your Municipalities' Budget

**Saturday, March 12, 2022**  
8:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

The Conference Center at Mercer • 1200 Old Trenton Rd. • West Windsor, NJ 08550

**C**reating and approving a feasible budget is one of the most important tasks of an Elected Official. It is also one of the most complex and time consuming tasks. To aide in this endeavor, the League has created a special half day program geared towards Elected Officials to help them in understanding the Municipal Budgeting Process.

**Please join us for this informative program!**

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*\*Member Rate: Includes Municipalities, State, County, Local Governments, and Municipal Utility Authorities*

*This program is a requirement of the Local Government Leadership Program. For more information visit [www.njlm.org/Iglp](http://www.njlm.org/Iglp)*



### Health & Safety Notice for In Person Seminars:

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 we recommend that attendees at our in person events wear a face mask regardless of vaccination status.



# Thursday

The final day of the Conference kept a steady pace and was ready to welcome Governor Phil Murphy to the League Luncheon, where awards were presented to the state's health officers and to Col. Pat Callahan, Superintendent of the NJ State Police. The end of the day saw the NJLM Business Meeting and the swearing in of the new officers and board members. Save the dates for next year's event in Atlantic City November 15-17, 2022.



**1** Colonel Patrick J. Callahan, Superintendent, New Jersey State Police accepts his Public Sector Career Recognition Award. **2** The Distinguished Public Service Award is presented to New Jersey Association of City and County Health Officials. Accepted from then NJLM President Mayor Janice Kovach by Marconi Gapas, President; Health Officer, Township of Union and Borough of Kenilworth Department of Health

**3** Incoming president Mayor William Pikolycky thanks outgoing president Mayor Janice Kovach. **4** NJLM President Mayor William Pikolycky, new Executive Board Members Mayor Rosemary Tuohy of Allamuchy and Council Member Ruby Cotton of Paterson, Immediate Past President Mayor Janice Kovach, and 1st Vice President Mayor Ray Heck of Millstone Borough.

## The Election is over. The votes have been counted. **And you've been elected!**

Start your term in Municipal Government on the right foot.  
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### **Orientation for Municipal Officials Who Are Newly Elected, Reelected, Or Experienced**

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**Saturday, February 5, 2022**  
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This orientation for municipal officials who are newly elected, reelected, or experienced is fast paced and designed to quickly bring officials up-to-date on important municipal issues. The newly elected officials will get a thorough overview of their major areas of responsibility, key contacts at the State level, and important sources of information and assistance.

**REGISTRATION FEE: Member \$130.00\* Non-Member \$150.00**

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#### **Health & Safety Notice for In Person**

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Local government is not the ground floor. It is the nerve center.

*Governor Phil Murphy*



**5** NJLM Executive Director Michael Cerra, Lt. Gov. Sheila Oliver, then NJLM President Mayor Janice Kovach. **6** Then NJLM President Mayor Kovach, Governor Phil Murphy, NJLM Executive Director Michael Cerra. **7** Town Crier Rich LaLena opens the League Luncheon. **8** NJLM Deputy Executive Director Lori Buckelew, NJLM then-VP Mayor William Pikolycky of Woodbine; NJLM Past President Mayor Tim McDonough; NJLM VP Mayor Ray Heck salute the flag. **9** Atlantic City Mayor and NJLM Executive Board Member Marty Small Sr. welcomes attendees to his hometown. **10** Governor Phil Murphy. **11** Jennifer Roselle, Partner, Genova Burns, speaks at the Personnel Policies–Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Policy session. **12** NJLM Labor Negotiations consultant Matthew U. Watkins with Kimberly Duma, Assistant Township Administrator, Bloomfield, and Karen Fornaro, CFO for Chatlam at the session Are You Prepared? Getting Ready for Negotiations.



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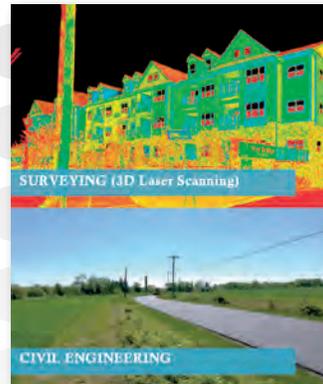
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# Local Governing



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## History in the Streets

Mayor Ras J. Baraka and Newark’s Division of Arts and Culture announced the completion of a new mural titled “The Future Nurtures the Past” by city native artist duo “Rorshach.” This double-sided nearly half-mile long mural stretches along Raymond Boulevard from University Avenue to Lock Street in the city’s Central Ward. It is the artist’s largest artwork to date.

This artwork took nearly two months to complete and included a large revitalization effort comprised of wall repair and much-needed landscaping. 500 gallons of paint were used in the production.

“The public murals seen around the city tell our stories, inspire, and empower our community, while simultaneously providing artists with a space to express their creativity and define the excellence of our city,” said Mayor Baraka. “This particular mural will beautify Raymond Boulevard, a major and historic artery in our downtown. This is a piece of outstanding work by two of our native artists and I am looking forward to seeing more such murals across Newark.”

The mural acts as a vibrant portal for those in transit. Each side shares a rush of color, colliding gradients, and forms, hinged by monumental-sized human hands. The hands are those of unrecognized women leaders from Newark that have shown the artists and others continuous care. They are built in honor of a single mother, a survivor, a student, and others that lead with perseverance. They are hands of strength that despite challenge, nurture and uplift. The artists hope that those driving by will feel the embrace that they have.

Interested in bringing more public art into your community? According to Project for Public Spaces, there several ways to fund public art:

- **Public/Private Sector Collaborations.** Partnerships between local governments and industry to fund artistic and environmental efforts.
- **Percent-for-art Ordinances.** An encumbrance of a percentage (typically .5 to 2%) of publicly funded capital improvement projects (CIP) for the funding of public art.
- **Alternate Sources of Funding.** These include use of vacant buildings for use by artists, foundation grants, parking meter revenue, a portion of hotel/motel taxes, sale tax revenue, county partnerships, and local arts organizations.

@ For more information, visit <https://www.pps.org/>.

# NJLM Supporters

The New Jersey State League of Municipalities would like to thank its supporters, who value their partnership with the 565 municipalities of New Jersey. For information about the League’s sponsorship program, please contact Michael F. Cerra at 609-695-3481, Ext. 112, or [mcerra@njlm.org](mailto:mcerra@njlm.org).



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NJ LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK EVENT



**Business Roundtable  
Discussion with Council  
& Town Officials**

Answering Questions Facing Local Businesses  
and Our Community

**APRIL 20, 2021 | 8:30 - 10 A.M.  
STAGEHOUSE TAVERN**

Join Mayor Losardo, members of the Town Council, as well as directors  
from the Department of Public Works, Inspections, Public Safety,  
Downtown Redevelopment and the Manager's Office for a discussion  
on Township issues

RSVP to Tom Strowe at [tstrowe@scotchplainnj.com](mailto:tstrowe@scotchplainnj.com)



# CELEBRATE NJ LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK



## NJLM invites you to join municipalities around the Garden State April 3-9, to engage citizens while celebrating the work of local government.

**SHOWCASE** the hard work of local governments and value residents receive by highlighting programs and services

**COORDINATE** community service and volunteering events with local organizations to cross-promote NJ Local Government Week.

**SHOW-OFF** your citizens' view of the community with photography showcases and contests that can serve as a feeder program for your entries to the League's Show Off Your Municipality photo contest!

Publicity tips and strategies as well as links to a sample press release and resolution and a downloadable NJ Local Government Week logo are available at [www.njlm.org/njlocalgovt](http://www.njlm.org/njlocalgovt).

#njlocalgovt



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