



MEDIA RELEASE

Mayor Michael O'Connor Outlines Plan to Increase Economic Vibrancy, Community Engagement

FREDERICK, MD – Dec. 14, 2017: Mayor Michael O'Connor began the City of Frederick's 62nd administration with a promise to move Frederick forward with greater participation from traditionally underrepresented segments of the population.

Forward movement will require a commitment to economic vibrancy, social equity and sustainability, he said during his remarks at the inauguration today. After thanking his predecessor, Randy McClement, mayor for the past eight years, O'Connor outlined his plan for the city's future.

"We now turn the page to the challenges and opportunities ahead, and we do so with enthusiasm and great optimism that, as good as our City is, to move forward, we must be better," O'Connor said.

- Better in community outreach and civic engagement
- Better in economic resilience and expanding vibrancy
- Better in housing availability
- Better in sustainability

He cited the troubling statistics that more than 40 percent of the City residents are one paycheck away from a financial crisis, or have an unstable housing situation, based on United Way's ALICE report of families who are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed.

"I think we are all alarmed to read and hear about the numbers contained in the ALICE report," he said. "Forty-three percent of families in the City of Frederick are standing on the ledge, surviving, while contributing in many ways to the strengths of our community, but one small catastrophe away from having their lives unravel.

"In a community like Frederick, if we are not aware of that reality, and not prepared to carry on the conversations required to address it, we are failing nearly half of our residents."

O'Connor committed to expanding economic opportunities and making sure information is distributed widely about what the City does, what it has to offer, and how everyone can contribute.

“We will embark on a new commitment to civic engagement, expanding the diversity of our workforce and our boards and commissions, doing more to bring underrepresented communities into the process of government, developing opportunities to inspire young people while keeping our seniors activated and engaged,” he said. “And, most important, we must restore faith in public institutions, at a time when public cynicism about what government can accomplish has never been higher.”

O’Connor described his professional commitment over the past 30 years to doing all he could to promote information, education, and engagement. In that vein, he announced that his first media briefing would be at 11 a.m. Friday, Dec. 15, in the City Hall Boardroom, for the purposes of outlining some of his immediate plans.

Today, he focused on three core areas: economics, housing and sustainability. Economic resilience will come from ensuring economic opportunity is available in every neighborhood, “from our redeveloping Golden Mile, to our established historic core, to our emerging East Frederick Rising,” he said.

His administration accepts a responsibility to address diverse housing needs and to ensure safe, clean, well maintained neighborhoods throughout Frederick.

The administration will do more to conserve natural resources -- land, air, and water quality, reduce reliance on gas and oil as a City, and encourage residents and businesses to do the same, and promote a healthy community that is active and supports locally sourced foods and other products.

“Some of our work plan is set: Major infrastructure projects, like Monocacy Boulevard and upgrades to our waste water treatment plant, move forward,” O’Connor said. “A downtown hotel and conference center will remain a priority. Planning continues on a West Side Regional Park, as does developing a plan for a new Police Department headquarters.

“But most of Frederick’s future is not written, and those are the opportunities we must welcome, with our heads up, prepared to respond, adaptable to the reality that even the easy project path is rarely a straight line.”

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