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## NEWS RELEASE

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# Major Projects, Clean & Safe Initiatives Highlight Mayor Small's 2024 'State of the City' Address

**Atlantic City, N.J. (February 4, 2024)** – On Friday, February 2, 2024, City of Atlantic City Mayor Marty Small, Sr. delivered his annual 'State of the City' address during the Metropolitan Business and Citizens Association (MBCA) Foundation Winter Luncheon at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City. This year's theme was '*Atlantic City 2024: Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now, We're on the Move.*' Below, please find a summary of the highlights of the presentation.

### City Projects and Development

The Atlantic City Aquarium will reopen for the first time since 2020 on July 1, 2024 once exterior renovations are complete. Interior renovations are finished. Money for the exterior comes from American Rescue Plan funding. Construction begins this April on Pop Lloyd Stadium and the City Hall Courtyard. The new Pop Lloyd baseball field will feature artificial blue turf, new dugouts, locker rooms, restrooms and fences with a scoreboard attached, and will have a multipurpose field for various sports. The Courtyard will be named 'Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver Plaza' in honor of the late Lieutenant Governor. Highlights include the addition of benches, beautiful trees and shrubs, a rain garden, a fountain, improved lighting and a covered walkway above the main entrance to City Hall, which will be gated. The project also features a redesigned main parking lot and north parking lot. Atlantic City is getting two new dog parks on both sides of the city, with the first one, 'Altman Dog Park,' opening in 2024. Meetings are ongoing with DEEM Enterprises on a Bader Field redevelopment agreement, which the city remains hopeful will happen sooner than later. Construction will start this year on The James Hotel in the city's Orange Loop section, which will house Kelsey's, moving the popular restaurant from Pacific Avenue to the Boardwalk.

## **Infrastructure**

Phase I of the Atlantic Avenue 'Road Diet' from Maine to Tennessee Avenues is now complete, with Phase II conduit installation now underway. Phase II paving, striping and traffic light synchronization from Tennessee to Albany Avenues is scheduled to begin in the early Fall. Construction will also begin this Fall on the Pacific Avenue Traffic Light Synchronization project from Albany to New Hampshire Avenues. Paving begins this Spring on Baltic Avenue from Maine to Missouri Avenues. The design phase of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard paving project from Rt. 30 to Mediterranean Avenue starts this year. The city received a \$6M grant from the United States Economic Development Authority for reconstruction of the Atlantic City Boardwalk from Bellevue to Missouri Avenues, and the city is aggressively seeking significant funding from New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy's \$100M Boardwalk Preservation Fund, announced last Summer.

## **Clean, Safe & Smart**

The City of Atlantic City and the Atlantic City Board of Education have a principal agreement in place to add a police officer in every K-8 school and two officers in Atlantic City High School throughout the entire school year. These officers will be hired through the \$3.75M Community Oriented Policing Services (C.O.P.S) Hiring Grant the city has been awarded. An additional ten officers hired through the grant will be dedicated to Pacific and Atlantic Avenue patrols. The ten officers in the schools will move to Atlantic and Pacific Avenue patrol during the Summer when school is out of session. The Police Department plans to reestablish the ACPD Motorcycle Unit this year, while intensifying police presence in areas affected by violence to start 2024. Installation continues on 1,000 state-of-the art cameras in every Atlantic City neighborhood which will aid the ACPD in crime reduction efforts. Other Safer City technology initiatives include the expansion of License Plate Reader capabilities, firearm recognition system, ShotSpotter expansion and securing citywide WiFi. In 2024, the Atlantic City Anti-Violence and Reentry Services programs will enhance neighborhood engagement, foster collaboration with local organizations and create more job opportunities for at-risk youth and young adults, among other goals. In 2023, the city hired two social workers, a Drug Prevention and Recovery Specialist and a Social Services director to help address homelessness. In 2024, the State of New Jersey is sending a Homeless Czar to Atlantic City, and ten Community Service Aides will be hired to assist the homeless team by moving homeless individuals along, and helping those individuals seek services, particularly along Atlantic and Pacific Avenues, Renaissance Plaza and Gateway School. The Boardwalk Improvement Group (BIG), which was formed to address homelessness and other quality of life issues in Atlantic City, will be fully staffed and implemented Memorial Day Weekend. Ten new members will be hired in the Department of Public Works thanks to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), while the department will continue its community cleanup initiative in 2024.

## **Youth and Seniors**

On top of the many successful programs and activities introduced in 2023, the Atlantic City Youth Services (ACYS) and Atlantic City Recreation (AC Rec) divisions will be offering even more in 2024. AC Rec will introduce additional diverse programs such as golf, cricket and karate for youth. The city has partnered with Major League Soccer for a special soccer program for city kids. The midnight basketball league for youth will return this year and a new Skate Park will be introduced. ACYS, which focuses on activities outside of sports, plans to hold a Summer Bash and Carnival for youth, while introducing SAT prep workshops and more activities for youth with disabilities. The city has also partnered with the Atlantic City Ballet for a new program for kids ages 7-14 at Boardwalk Hall. The Atlantic City Senior Services division will introduce a senior book club, CPR classes and monthly market trips for Atlantic City residents 55 and older, while making the annual Senior Gala bigger and better than ever before.

### **City Department News**

The Department of Revenue and Finance will look for another tax decrease in 2024, while making more aggressive investments (\$1.4M turned into \$9.9M in 2023). The Solicitor's Office will look to continue a trend of coming under the budget under the Small administration (\$3.9M saved in the last four years). The Atlantic City Fire Department plans to reoccupy Station 3 (Indiana and Grant Avenues). Atlantic City will be marketed like never before in 2024, with a focus on the neighborhoods, thanks to a marketing grant that will allow the city to utilize a videographer for promotional efforts. Small Businesses will be a major focus in 2024 thanks to a micro loan program, small business assistance program and economic development project. Council voting will soon be conducted electronically at Council Chambers. All Atlantic City employees, through a partnership with Stockton, are receiving Microsoft Office training.

### **Education and Opportunity**

Educational programs for Atlantic City residents in 2024 will include the 3<sup>rd</sup> cohort of the Atlantic City Infrastructure Program (ACIP), plus the return of the Mayor's Office Small Business Academy, Investment Cohort, Credit Repair Program and Ernest Tans Trucking School. A welding program and program for first generation nurses will also be introduced, while 100 new Atlantic City residents will be receiving \$10,000 each through the Mayor Marty Small, Sr. Scholarship. A lottery program for first -time Atlantic City homebuyers and small businesses will start this year, which will include set asides for affordable income levels. More details will be announced on this program in the coming months. Mayor Small promised the city's Winter Wonderland Parade, which takes place on Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> will be "the biggest parade in the Great City of Atlantic City since Ms. America."

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