

# THE CITY OF SUMMIT

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CITY HALL 512 SPRINGFIELD AVENUE SUMMIT, NJ 07901

## News Release

For immediate release

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### **Summit Mayor Elizabeth Fagan Delivers State of the City Address at 2026 Organization Meeting**

SUMMIT, NJ, January 7, 2026 – Summit welcomed the new year in City Hall at its annual Organization Meeting on January 6, marking the start of the 2026 governing year. Before the meeting, residents, families, city staff, and community leaders gathered in the lobby as the Summit High School Hilltop String Quartet filled the space with music, continuing a cherished tradition and setting the tone for an evening focused on service, civic pride, and community.

During the meeting, newly elected councilmembers Jaclyn Lasaracina (Ward 1), Chantal Landman (Ward 2), and Dan Crisafulli (At-Large) were sworn in. Councilmember Claire Toth was elected by council as the 2026 Council President, and Councilmember Kalmanson was elected as the 2026 Council President Pro Tem. Council President Toth and Mayor Fagan recognized retiring resident volunteers for their service on city boards, commissions, and committees. They also recognized outgoing councilmembers Delia Hamlet and Kevin Smallwood, and outgoing Council President Mike McTernan, thanking them for the time, leadership, and dedication they brought to Summit.

Mayor Elizabeth Fagan delivered her State of the City Address, focusing on safety, the work of the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness to eradicate homelessness in Summit, and new projects in the works for the community.

#### **Mayor Fagan State of the City Address 2026**

Good evening, everyone.

Thank you for being here tonight. Thank you to our residents, our volunteers, our boards, our city employees, and our first responders. And thank you to our families, who share us with the work of public service.

We love this city. And we know what makes Summit special. Tonight is a chance to look back on what we accomplished together in 2025, and to share where we are headed next.

#### **Police Department**

Everything we cherish about Summit starts with safety. Our charming neighborhoods. Our vibrant downtown. Our schools and sports. Our events. The simple freedom for a child to run to a friend's house, grab a ball, and meet at Memorial Field. The confidence for teens to walk downtown for ice cream. The peace of mind that comes from knowing your community is looking out for you. That only happens when safety is real. And in 2025, we strengthened it.

# THE CITY OF SUMMIT

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N E W                    J E R S E Y

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CITY HALL    512 SPRINGFIELD AVENUE    SUMMIT, NJ 07901

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We strengthened our Police Department in a concrete way. We added two additional police positions to our organization table, and we continued to invest in the people and resources that keep Summit safe.

2025 was also a year of important transition and renewal within the Police Department. We said farewell to our former chief with gratitude for dedicated service. We promoted Ryan Peters as our new Chief of Police, and we promoted an entirely new command staff as well.

Along the way, we offered fond farewells to those retiring after decades of service, and we welcomed new faces who are choosing Summit because of who we are: a community with spirit, strong relationships, and a culture of mutual respect. Summit is a place where we support law enforcement, expect excellence, and work in partnership to keep our community safe.

This year, we felt what safety really means.

With additional staffing, our Resident Protection Ordinance, and the tools and support we've provided to our police department, we have seen fewer burglaries, less crime, and a greater sense of safety across Summit. Our Chief, Ryan Peters, will give a more detailed report with crime stats during our meeting on January 20th.

But statistics only tell part of the story. The rest is character. This year, two members of our police department helped save a mother and child from a burning building in Newark. In that moment, they weren't thinking about recognition. They were thinking about two lives that needed help. And that says something powerful about the kind of officers who serve Summit every day, in every neighborhood, and in every call that comes in.

## **Fire Department**

We strengthened our fire department as well. We added two additional firefighters, and we swore in several new firefighters to replace those who have moved on or retired, ensuring we maintain strong staffing and readiness. We also provided additional training, because preparedness is not something we assume. It is something we continually build.

2025 was also a major year for the fire department and for how our residents connect with the work they do. We moved into the new firehouse, and we were proud to welcome the community in during our first Government Week event there. Hundreds of residents came through, saw the space, met our staff, and got a firsthand look at the people and the work that keep Summit running.

And our fire department represented Summit on a national stage when they were featured on the Today Show in a segment about kitchen safety over the holidays. They showed the country what we already know here: Summit sets a standard. Responsible, well spoken, and deeply caring.

## **Homelessness**

Another priority in 2025 was addressing homelessness in Summit, not by pushing people away, but by helping people find a place to live. You all remember where we were two years ago, and even one year ago. And you can see the difference today. We are at functional zero, because of the incredible work of

# THE CITY OF SUMMIT

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N E W J E R S E Y

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the Mayor's Homelessness Task Force. Law enforcement, case managers, and volunteers worked side by side, refusing to accept "this is just the way it is."

We also want to offer special thanks to outgoing Councilmember Delia Hamlet, who personally helped move so many individuals into new homes and helped them get set up with what they needed to start over. That is the spirit of Summit.

We don't ignore a problem. We don't look away. We recognize that it is inhumane for people to live outside without shelter. And we also recognize that it isn't safe for a community to leave challenges unaddressed.

So, we did what Summit does best. We worked with professionals. We set the right boundaries. We connected people with services. We found housing options. And we made progress that is real, visible, and meaningful. And everyone benefits.

## **Affordable Housing**

We also made important progress on affordable housing in 2025, and we did it the Summit way.

We completed our Round 3 affordable housing commitments, and we submitted our plan for Round 4. We worked closely with our churches and partners across the community to find creative ways to offer affordable housing options without overdevelopment and without jeopardizing the city by burdening our roads, our resources, and our schools.

It is not easy work, and it matters. Because the goal is balance. It is making room for people who want to live here, work here, raise families here, and age here, while making sure growth is responsible and sustainable.

## **Responsible Planning**

In 2025, we delivered on another major priority: we sold the old firehouse. Residents spoke clearly about what they wanted. We listened. We focused on zoning that works within our city. We pursued a solution that brings resources and benefits to Summit without taking away what makes Summit special. We did it.

With that sale, we will be able to secure the funds anticipated to help cover the cost of the new firehouse, and we will benefit from annual tax revenue from what is built there in the future. That is responsible planning. That is Summit making smart decisions for the long term.

## **Youth and Recreation**

We also focused in 2025 on creating more opportunities for our young people. More opportunities to practice sports. To get outside. To get off screens. To bond with friends through activities that build character, confidence, teamwork, and community. And we achieved a major milestone with the Tatlock Field lights.

# THE CITY OF SUMMIT

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N E W J E R S E Y

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This was a complicated issue. People cared deeply, and understandably. We listened. We debated. We worked. And we reached a solution with clear guidelines voted on by council, and a commitment to responsible use.

Because of that work, Summit's kids will now have more opportunities to practice in the early evening when it's already dark. That is a huge win for the youth of Summit, and we want to recognize outgoing Councilmember Kevin Smallwood for his leadership and persistence in helping make that happen.

## **Pedestrian Safety**

We also tackled an issue residents have been talking about for a long time: e-bikes and e-scooters.

We passed an ordinance to keep our downtown business district safe by protecting sidewalks for pedestrians. We made it clear that e-scooters and e-bikes belong on streets, because of their speed. And if you aren't comfortable riding in the streets downtown, please walk your bike or scooter.

And we didn't stop at enforcement. We leaned into education. We met with middle schoolers and high schoolers on e-bike and e-scooter safety. We produced videos and informational materials. We installed signage throughout downtown so everyone understands what is allowed and what is not.

And we took additional steps to improve pedestrian safety for everyone, including a new flashing beacon at Morris Avenue and Butler Parkway, along with public-facing educational materials to help keep residents and visitors safe.

Our department of public works answered more than 4,000 See-Click-Fix entries. Thank you to our residents who help us keep our city clean, in great shape and thriving by letting us know when there is an issue that needs to be fixed.

## **Schools and Responsible Taxes**

Summit's schools are one of our greatest sources of pride. They make this city shine, and we value the excellence our educators deliver every day.

It's also important to be clear about roles. The Board of Education determines the school budget and how those dollars are allocated. The city does not decide where school funding goes. But we do have a responsibility to keep property taxes in check for residents, and to work collaboratively wherever we can to manage costs responsibly.

In 2025, we worked with our partners to help find efficiencies so we could preserve excellent education while maintaining responsible taxes. And we will do that again this year, protecting what makes Summit outstanding, while respecting what families are paying.

## **Financial Stewardship**

Summit's Triple-A credit rating is something we should be proud of. It means we get the lowest rates possible when we borrow. It is a signal of stability, strong management, and long-term responsibility.

# THE CITY OF SUMMIT

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N E W J E R S E Y

CITY HALL 512 SPRINGFIELD AVENUE SUMMIT, NJ 07901

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In 2025, we maintained a balanced budget while continuing to provide the services and resources residents need and expect. And we kept our tax base in check, ensuring the overall tax increase was less than two percent.

## **Keeping Residents Informed**

A thriving city is an informed city. In 2025, we launched a quarterly newsletter that goes to every household, keeping residents informed both online and offline. Going forward, we are looking at even more ways to engage the public, so that more residents can participate, understand what's happening, and share ideas. Because the best ideas in Summit don't just come from City Hall. They come from residents who care deeply about this community.

## **Looking Forward**

Looking forward, we are also investing in the everyday infrastructure that keeps Summit safe, walkable, and connected.

This spring and summer, our department of public works will be making numerous improvements across the city, including revitalizing Ashland Road and sidewalks, adding sidewalks to Canoe Brook Parkway along with traffic calming measures, and moving ahead with additional plans for improvements on Broad Street, Springfield Avenue, and Glenside Avenue.

These projects will be funded through a combination of grants and capital funds, with a clear goal: enhance walkability and safety for everyone who lives here, works here, and visits Summit.

## **Parks and What's Next**

We also made real progress in 2025 on the places that bring people together. Summit's first all abilities playground is coming to Mabie Playground, and it will be ready for everyone to use this spring. It's a project many families have been waiting for, and we're excited to see it open. This year you will also see upgrades to the Tatlock/Washington School playground as well!

And looking ahead, we have wonderful events on the horizon to celebrate 250 years of American history. In April, we will host a Revolutionary Trail Day, with historical activities around town. It's a chance to learn, to celebrate, and to experience the story of our country right here in our own community.

## **A Year We Shared Together**

As we look back on 2025, it's worth saying out loud what we all feel: Summit is more than a municipality. Summit is a community in the truest sense of the word.

We experienced joy with the birth of many babies among our city staff. We shared moments of pride as Summit's professionalism was recognized beyond our borders. And we also walked through heartbreak together with the loss of Firefighter Lonn Mullen. We grieved together. We supported one another and we stood with Lonn's family. We will not forget him, and we will carry forward the example he set through his service, his steadiness, and the way he showed up for this community.

# THE CITY OF SUMMIT

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Those moments, joy, pride, grief, are not separate from the story of our city. They are the story. They are what remind us that behind every uniform, every desk, every meeting, every call for service, there are people who care deeply about this place and about one another.

Summit is special in how we come together, in our demand for excellence, and in our deep caring to help others, no matter where we are called to serve.

## **Closing**

When people ask why Summit is consistently recognized as one of the top places to live in New Jersey, one of the top commuter communities to New York, and one of the best places to live in America, the answer is the same one we experience every day.

It's our safety. It's our community spirit. It's our schools and teams. It's our downtown. It's our events. It's neighbors looking out for neighbors. And none of it happens by accident. It happens because this community shows up, speaks up, and works together, with respect, with responsibility, and with high expectations for ourselves.

2025 was a year of real progress. And in 2026, we will keep building on that momentum, with the same Summit approach: thoughtful, practical, and always focused on protecting the quality of life we all treasure. And speaking personally, I couldn't be prouder to serve as mayor of this city.

Thank you for being here tonight. Thank you for your trust, your involvement, and your love for Summit.

The full meeting can be viewed on the city [YouTube channel](#).

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