

Good evening everyone.

Let me start by thanking all of you for being here. Especially my family: my wife Daveen, my boys Joseph and Jack, my Mom Paula, and all my family and friends. Without their support and encouragement I would never be standing here as Mayor of this great city.

While I have the privilege to deliver tonight's remarks, I know our city's success is a team effort, achieved in partnership with dedicated public officials. And so I extend a welcome and my gratitude to:

- Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito,
- Speaker of the House of Representatives Robert DeLeo, and our delegation at the State House Senator Joe Boncore and Representative Roselee Vincent.
- Suffolk County District Attorney Rachel Rollins and Suffolk County Sheriff Steve Tompkins;
- Council President Arthur Guinasso and the Revere City Council;
- Superintendent Dr. Dianne Kelly and members of the Revere School Committee.
- Police Chief Jim Guido and Fire Chief Chris Bright.
- Welcome to the members of clergy here tonight.

Thank you all for being here and for working with us throughout the year.

To the employees of the City of Revere, thank you for the dedicated effort you bring to work every day.

Thank you to the many volunteers who fill important roles in our city.

And to all the people of Revere, Thank you for the trust and privilege you have vested in me.

I also want to welcome a special guest, Jaedan Wixon, a second-grader at the Hill School. Jaedan probably doesn't know this, but he actually helped write tonight's speech.

A couple months ago, Jaedan won a charity drawing. It wasn't much of a prize, he won lunch with the Mayor!

Jaedan came to City Hall and sat with me for over an hour as we ate our turkey sandwiches—(his favorite). Jaedan asked a lot of questions about what it was like to be the Mayor of our City. He was curious about how things work. He wondered if I worried about people and what different ways I could help them.

He said he thought it was "cool" to be the Mayor.

Preparing this address gave me the chance to reflect on where we were three years ago, to consider what we have accomplished since then, and to think about the bright future that lies ahead.

I realized that Jaedan embodies all that makes the demanding work of running a city so worthwhile. Jaedan personifies all that is good about our city and our future. His questions and comments underscored both the privilege and the responsibility that come with being Mayor.

So Jaedan, Yes, it is "cool" to be Mayor of a vibrant city.

It is cool to see our city grow and to lead an administration committed to our city's prosperity.

It is cool, on nights like tonight, when I get to deliver good news.

So tonight, I am pleased report that the State of our City is strong.

At last year's State of the City, I talked about some of the achievements from our first couple of years in the Mayor's office.

I cited the effort to increase staffing and improve the assets of our police, fire, and public works departments, and I praised the accomplishments of our school district.

I even expressed the hope that maybe--*just maybe*--2018 would be the year that we take our first step to building a new Revere High School.

Though much had been accomplished, I concluded last year's address with one simple message:

We are not done.

With the support and cooperation of our City Council and our School Committee, we continued Revere's progress. Now, in 2019, our City is thriving_

- Economic development has advanced from the planning stages to active construction of new hotels and businesses that will bolster our commercial tax base.
- Our Department of Public Works and the Water & Sewer Department... with additional staff and new equipment, work smarter, and with better results.

And the plans are advancing on a long-overdue state-of-the-art DPW facility.

- A new Ladder truck arrived at Central Fire Station just a few weeks ago, and we have made progress toward a fire station in the Point of Pines.
- The ranks of our police and fire departments continue to grow.
- Doing business with the City has become easier. Our 311 constituent services line was expanded, and more and more residents utilized its convenience.
- And finally, in December, we received the wonderful news for which we have waited years: the Massachusetts School Building Authority announced its initial approval of the City's bid for a new Revere High School.

This happens when people work together, synchronized toward the common goal of fulfilling Revere's tremendous potential.

This will continue to happen as we work toward a Revere known for professionalized city services, a modern economy and strong, lively neighborhoods that we are all proud to call "home."

When I took office, I believed that Revere operated with outdated practices that were inefficient and wasteful in modern times. So I commissioned an independent, comprehensive audit to dig deep into our finances.

When that audit was completed last year, my beliefs were validated.

The audit revealed nearly 2.2 million dollars lying around in 86 different inactive accounts, some going back years.

Fellow residents, I believe that single example largely symbolizes why we embarked on the new course we have followed during these past three years, a course of foresight, progress, and modern tools.

No longer does Revere simply plod along with the way things always were; we have sought out and implemented new and better ways to do business.

Strong leadership means facing adversity when it arises, and taking the steps to overcome it.

One example is our Parking Department. After decades of neglect, old hand-me-down parking meters were an eyesore on Broadway and Shirley Avenue, and most of them didn't work.

Inept collection efforts resulted in steadily declining amounts of parking revenue. Parking enforcement was inconsistent.

In 2018, we overhauled the Parking department. We invested in new equipment. We implemented efficient collection procedures, and parking revenue that had plummeted for years now averages more than \$3000 per week.

Most important, we restored trust in the Parking Department.

And now, Revere can reap one of the benefits of the 2016 Municipal Modernization Act that Governor Baker, Lieutenant Governor Polito and Speaker DeLeo guided through the Legislature.

We will be able to create a Parking Benefit District, where parking revenue will be reinvested directly back to the district for improvements such as pedestrian safety measures, trees, benches and lighting.

Where we discover adversity, we deal with it, and cut a path to progress. And again, I have a simple, but clear message: We are still not done...because progress is never done.

We must continue to think anew, and accept challenges as opportunities. And we will continue to seek new endeavors that will build upon the sturdy foundation set during the past three years.

Last April, the City achieved its highest bond rating in history. In raising Revere's bond rating to Double-A, Standard and Poor said – and I quote:

"We believe Revere's budgetary flexibility will likely remain very strong with management's continuous efforts to reduce overspending and tighten expenditure control."

My response to Standard and Poor's assessment? You're absolutely right.

The kind of budgetary control that impressed Standard and Poor resulted in Revere certifying 11.2 million dollars in Free Cash in 2018.

I pledged a portion of that money to the redesign and continued modernization of the Department of Public Works and our Water & Sewer Department.

These departments affect a city's quality of life more than any other. In 2018 alone, they responded to over 23,000 service requests, the kind that crop up every day, everything from pothole repair to snow removal; water main breaks to clearing clogged storm drains. They maintain our streets and sidewalks and parks and public buildings, and they are among the first responders on call 24/7 to respond to disasters and emergencies.

But over the course of many years, DPW and Water and Sewer always were slighted. Staff dwindled. They were relegated to a dilapidated facility that was a public embarrassment.

We took the necessary steps to end the exile at DPW and Water and Sewer. Now these vital departments respond to the tens of thousands of requests with an increased labor force and equipment that works, and efficiency will improve as we implement new oversight and data management practices.

To those employees who work in the extreme heat and bitter cold, who climb into the muddy ditches and the dense weeds where they confront and correct the consequences of aging infrastructure and institutional neglect, a grateful city says "Thank you."

And we are not done.

We devoted another portion of the “Free Cash” funds directly toward our water and sewer rates. In June, I happily presented a \$2 million dollar check to our rate payers, representing a 3 percent decrease in the city’s water and sewer rates.

That decrease represented the first rate reduction in 20 years.

Though we still await certification from the state, we anticipate free cash in 2019 of approximately \$9 million dollars, the second highest amount in Revere’s history—trailing only last year. When that happens, we will commit the money to areas of need with the singular objective of a stronger, cleaner, better Revere.

Investment in our city is imperative. But, as I hope everyone knows, I am a homeowner too, and so I realize the weight of taxes. That is why we are devoted to policies of prudent money management that keep our tax burden as low as legally possible while making sure that we receive the best services our tax dollars can provide.

At the start of my Administration, I set goals to lower the cost of essential services for our residents. After three years of stringent budgetary policies, we were able in 2018 to implement an owner-occupied real estate tax break that will save eligible seniors over \$500 off their real estate bill.

We’ve added another bracket of discounts so that qualified seniors are eligible for up to 30 percent off their water and sewer bill.

We continue to work toward a residential tax exemption for all owner-occupied homes. It’s not easy. If it were, it would have been done years ago. But nothing worthwhile is ever easy, and we are willing to exert the effort to make it happen.

Lowering the cost of essential services for our residents?

Yes, and we are not done.

We speak of a cleaner Revere. In 2018, we delivered more than 16,000 new, heavy-duty trash carts to every residential property. This is a key element of our plans to address one of the most expansive challenges facing communities everywhere: trash disposal and the fight against rodents. It is a problem that we share with every urban community in the nation, and many of our suburban neighbors.

And while it is a problem we would prefer to avoid, we have confronted it head on. Revere is a leader, not only with our trash disposal program, but in retaining professional exterminators to assist property owners in battling rodent activity.

We join with every resident and business in this ongoing effort, and I thank those who are fighting for a cleaner Revere and a sustainable city, and I want to remind you that we are not done.

Revere provides its residents with a high level of services, and to that end we have vigorously pursued state and federal grants to help deliver a high quality of life to our residents. Thanks to Revere’s partnership with the Baker-Polito Administration, Speaker DeLeo, Representative Vincent and Senator Boncore, Revere received state grants in 2018 that will result in the purchase of new laptops for our police cruisers and other tools necessary to keep our neighborhoods safe.

We also received grants that will help protect our coastline; will help fund our Commission on Disabilities to expand programs for the community they serve; and will give us the opportunity to completely renovate the Gibson Park playground and ball field. This will be the sixth recreational space we will renovate since 2016.

Last March, Governor Baker came to our very own Bagel Bin to deliver the news of a \$2 million dollar MassWorks grant for upgrades to the Shirley Avenue District.

Our federal delegation—Senators Markey and Warren and Representative Clark—helped Revere become one of just four communities in Massachusetts to receive a US Department of Justice COPS Safety grant to fund critical safety measures to prevent violence in our schools.

Revere was awarded a \$1.1 million dollar federal grant through the Department of Homeland Security that made it possible to hire four new firefighters, assuring that our fire stations are fully staffed and always prepared to respond to situations where every second counts.

Every dime awarded to the City of Revere helps improve our city... and makes living here even better. We thank our federal and state delegations for your partnership and your efforts on Revere's behalf.

I just want everyone to please keep in mind: The state and federal government doesn't just casually give away grant money. Revere competes with every community in the state or in the country for these grants. They are awarded based on the merit and the quality of the grant application. The grants happen thanks to the dedicated people who work for our city. So thank you to all the staff that help make these grants possible.

A municipal government is comprised of many separate departments that interact with our residents every day, and not just in times of emergency or inconvenience.

A strong city provides great recreational opportunities as well.

Our Recreation Department, which offers year-round programs for people of every age, is a prime example of how city government provides for all of its residents.

They host open gyms, run a teen center, organize sports leagues, coordinate field trips, arrange instructional classes for all ages—the list goes on and on.

And while the Recreation Department earns high praise from so many people, one of the most common frustrations that I hear involves the limitations at our Recreation Center on Beach Street.

Our Rec staff does tremendous work, but there's only so much they can do at their current location.

That is why tonight, I am especially pleased to announce that later this year, we will begin a Pilot Program using the Garfield School as a true Community Center where our residents can enjoy the gym, the swimming pool, and attend classes in a variety of interesting topics.

This is one more example of innovative collaboration, and I thank Superintendent Dr. Dianne Kelly and the School Department for their work in making this possible.

Speaking of our School Department; it continues to shine.

While the prospect of a new Revere High School is exciting, it is still a few years before the doors open. Meanwhile, our outstanding teachers, Administrators and staff continue to provide an exceptional foundation for Revere's children.

Their efforts produced a Revere High School Class of 2018 that sent 340 graduates to higher education.

The success in our school district continues this year, when Revere High will graduate its first-ever Questbridge Scholarship winners. Over 16,000 students from all across the country apply for Questbridge Scholarships, and only about five per cent succeed.

We have two at Revere High School. Julia Tran will attend Dartmouth, and Tran Nguyen will attend Washington and Lee on full, four-year scholarships. Julia and Tran, Congratulations and thank you.

The Class of 2019 will also include a pair of Posse Foundation Scholarship winners. The Posse Foundation aligns a select group of talented students with partner colleges where they can become catalysts for individual and community development.

Again, amid intense nationwide competition, Revere High School stands out.

Let's give a warm welcome to our Posse Foundation Scholarship winners, Seba Ismail, who will attend Bucknell, and Ebrar Yilmaz who will attend Bryn Mawr...

Meanwhile, over 50 students are enrolled in college courses and earning college credits through the state's dual-enrollment partnerships.

In addition, more than 100 students participated in internships with local businesses and non-profits organizations.

The quality of our students directly reflects the quality of our teachers. While every one of them deserves our praise and appreciation, Revere was uniquely honored when one of our faculty members was named Massachusetts STEM Educator of the Year. The Award recognizes one Massachusetts educator who excels in teaching in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math.

Erin Cronin teaches advanced placement calculus at Revere High School. In the past two years, all of her students have passed the AP calculus exam.

And while Erin may be a graduate of Saugus High, she truly is a daughter of RHS, as both her parents also taught at Revere High School.

Teachers excel when they place high expectations upon their students. A feature story in the Boston Globe praised Erin and cited the extraordinary success by Revere High School students in AP Calculus, a success rate that surpasses statewide averages by better than 30 per cent.

Erin explained it directly: "We don't lower our expectations here."

Erin said of her students, "If I continue to raise the bar, they will continue to rise to meet it." And she added: "I hope to make my students proud and to provide them with pride in their city."

Erin, you have made your students proud, and you have made our entire City proud. Thank you for the way you represent the Revere Public Schools and the entire City of Revere.

Our definition of good government entails transparency in the way we conduct business, connection to the people we serve, and constant attention to methods that can make a better Revere.

Our march toward modernization will continue in 2019 and beyond.

Later this year we will unveil a new city website that will make it even easier for anyone to do business with our city. When completed, the new website will be a virtual entry into City Hall.

Later this year, we will take City Hall into the neighborhoods. We will take our old senior shuttle van, refit it, and turn it into a Mobile City Hall, where residents will be able to do everything from pay a bill to get a library card.

My fellow residents, tonight Revere stands at the edge of a future where dreams will come true. For decades, we have lamented the lack of a commercial tax base in Revere, and the underuse of our magnificent beachfront. Reliable employers such as Wonderland Dog Track and Suffolk Downs closed.

But now, from the rubble of years gone by, from vacant lots where only memories remain, unprecedented opportunity beckons. We are courting high tech and advanced manufacturing companies to intriguing parcels of land such as the Necco and Wonderland sites. We will revitalize the areas into active, productive properties that will boost our commercial tax base and provide employment opportunities for all our residents.

We will not stand idly by while surrounding communities flourish. We will not let our city be just a pass-through for neighboring commuters on their way to Boston.

For a change, Revere is setting the pace, not lagging behind.

Seven hotels are slated to open in Revere over the next few years, with construction underway on a pair of signature hotels on Revere Beach Boulevard. Amenities like full service restaurants, Starbucks, and other innovative spaces will spark vitality at the Markey Bridge and on Revere Beach, where visitors and residents alike will be able to enjoy the magnificent view of the ocean.

Our vision stretches far beyond the next few years.

Just a few weeks ago, we kicked off *Next Stop Revere*, our collective effort to envision our future and drive our own destiny through comprehensive community-based planning that will serve as a design for Revere's next quarter century.

Partnering with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, we will collaborate with the public and planning experts to chart Revere's future course. We will develop a plan that will drive the kind of economic opportunities that our residents deserve.

When we talk about the future of Revere, there is one project that embodies and epitomizes Revere's evolution: the redevelopment of the Suffolk Downs property. 161 acres of pure, unparalleled potential, forty per cent of it in our city.

We have described the development of that land as being 'transformative' for Revere. And while "transformative" may be the one word that aptly describes what's in store, even that sounds like an understatement.

And it is for real.

Following more than two years of planning, dozens of public meetings, community comment and input, the Planned Unit Development was overwhelmingly approved by our City Council.

Later this year, we will witness the early stages of a 15-20 year project that will recast land we've always known as horse barns into a lively community: An Innovation Center and full service hotel will rise, a new network of roadways and bike trails will connect Beachmont with unique retail, restaurants, and office space. Infrastructure improvements will help ease traffic flow and reduce flooding. And everyone will be able to enjoy recreational areas like we have never seen in our city.

No longer will we visit energetic mixed-use neighborhoods like Assembly Row or Market Street and leave with a touch of envy. No longer will we only wish that Revere had the kind of accommodations to attract national and international companies to establish their headquarters in our city.

Soon Revere will have its own.

The Suffolk Downs project, upon completion of all phases, is projected to generate \$43 million dollars every year in total tax revenue.

So much has happened in three years, so much is happening, and so much lies ahead for our city.

Jaedan: that is why it's "cool" to be Mayor of this great city. The City we visualize tonight is where you and your friends will grow up. It is where my sons will grow up. And, looking ahead, I'll borrow Erin Cronin's phrase:

We WILL NOT lower our expectations here.

We are crafting a Revere for the 21st century, and we get right back to work tomorrow morning. We will continue to work with a positive attitude, an attentive ear, and an enlightened vision.

We will do so fortified by our belief in this city and its people, motivated by our quest for progress, and determined to guide Revere to its rightful place among the great communities of the Commonwealth.

And no one will be left behind. We will build on our traditions, our values, and do what the people of Revere have always done—take care of each other.

So I say to you and all the residents of Revere:

The state of our City?

Strong, and getting stronger.

The future of our City?

Bright and getting brighter.

Our commitment to our City? Unwavering.

We are making a great city greater, and

we are not done.

Thank you and god bless the city of Revere.