



A black and white photograph of a winding concrete path that curves through a grassy field. The path starts in the foreground and leads towards the background, where it disappears into the distance. The grass is dense and well-maintained. In the upper right corner, a portion of a building and a parking area with a car are visible.

A PATH TO BETTER

Dr. Lilisa Mimms, Candidate Councilwoman-at-Large

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INTRODUCTION

To concisely sum up Paterson's problems would be a herculean task in itself, there are many. In short, Paterson is struggling on many fronts and all measures to which you would gauge a progressive city are headed in the wrong direction. From its high taxes, high unemployment rate, decreasing tax base, ongoing homelessness problem, increasing murder rate, blight and several others, Paterson's condition continues to be a desolate one. When you add the absence of a collective vision for the city, a seemingly one trick pony to regularly increase taxes, growing debt, and a continued reliance on \$25M annually of state aid to help with its operating budget, Paterson's future doesn't look bright. While Paterson's conditions appear to be worsening, other struggling cities like Newark and Camden's financial and economic conditions are changing for the better. Paterson challenges are so bad, that last year the Wall Street Journal did a feature article on Paterson and its financial challenges and political turmoil.

“Paterson was once a renowned silk-manufacturing hub. Today, it is one of New Jersey’s poorest cities, hobbled by a stagnant economy, persistent crime and political dysfunction.”

– Wall Street Journal

Source: King, K. (2016, October 19). Paterson, N.J., Slogs Along, Mired in Economic Troubles and Political Strife. Retrieved December 01, 2017, from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/paterson-n-j-slogs-along-mired-in-economic-troubles-and-political-strife-1476815328>

PATERSON CHALLENGES

- ✓ Homelessness
- ✓ Code enforcement
- ✓ Blight
- ✓ Foreclosures
- ✓ Taxes
- ✓ Financial
- ✓ Economic Development
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Recreation
- ✓ Crime
- ✓ Debt
- ✓ Clean Streets
- ✓ Corruption
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Historic Preservation
- ✓ Roads



“Paterson faces many challenges, however, cities like Atlantic City, Newark and Camden have proven that such challenges can be overcome by putting in place a collaborative, thoughtful and comprehensive plan. A plan based on priorities and those things that directly benefit the people.”

DR. LILISA MIMMS MANIFESTO

As a single mother, community leader, public servant and lifelong resident of Paterson, I am committed to Paterson and the well-being of its people. I believe Paterson's future can be as bright as it once was. I intend to be a catalyst and a fighter for change in the pursuit of *"A Better Paterson."*



We Will Govern for All People.

Paterson is one of the most diverse cities in the nation, our voice will be one that represents all people.



Collaboration is Essential To Paterson's Promise of Greatness.

We believe in bringing strong leaders together with very diverse ideas to ensure Paterson benefits from inclusive thought leadership.



Impactful & Measurable Actions Matter.

Our belief is that the only true gauge of our performance will be the quantitative and qualitative value we provide to our residents through our actions.



We Can Do Better & We Will Be Better.

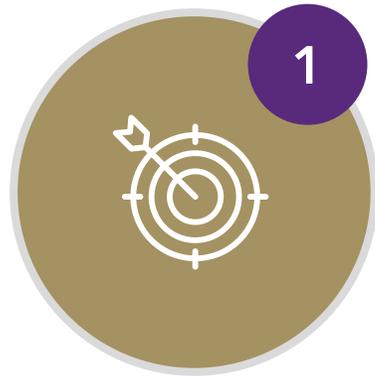
Accountability and transparency are hallmarks of building trust. We expect to be held accountable for committing to be better. We wouldn't have it any other way

INTRODUCTION TO BETTER

A path to BETTER isn't about having the answers to all the cities problems; we don't believe anyone can honestly say that they have all the answers. A path to better is about setting a foundation for moving Paterson forward. It is about establishing an approach and taking action to define the vision and plan for the city. In doing so, we identify the challenges and then prioritize them together. We then make investments based on those priorities and establish governance and measuring mechanisms to ensure we are executing on our plan to effectively manage those priorities and our investments responsibly.

BETTER is about a cultural shift in how the city thinks and acts as it relates to running the city and engaging the community in collaborative decision-making. It is simply about putting the residents and the city first.

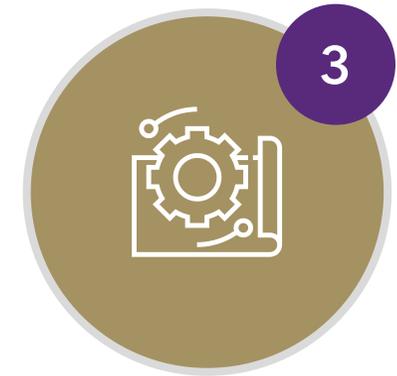
BETTER APPROACH



Define the goals and objectives for a path forward.



Validate the analysis and approach based on real examples of other municipalities.



Formulate and publish the plan for a BETTER Paterson.

BETTER OVERVIEW



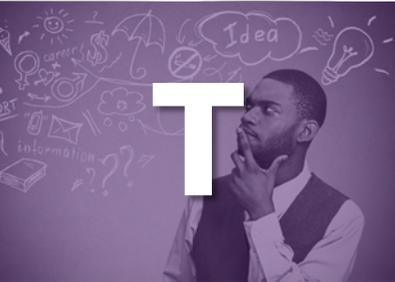
Build the foundation for a Better Paterson

1. Change the culture
2. Establish listening forums for community, state and county officials
3. Set up Strategic Plan / Vision workshops
4. Drive initiative to seek advisory from leadership of progressive cities
5. Explore relationships with other public/private entities to provide services at reduced costs
6. Actively seek diverse ideas from the community that add value to city objectives



Engage The Community

1. Establish a volunteer Community Ward Council (CWC) to obtain the Voice of the Citizens (VOC)
2. Initiate Community Government Education (CGE) forums to educate citizens on how government works
3. Engage youth quarterly
4. Investment in recreation, our youth and seniors



Transformative Thought Leadership

1. Operate Government based on a 5 year strategic plan
2. Set hard hiring requirements for new developers (no less than 30% Paterson residents hired as a requirement)
3. Create and entrepreneurship friendly city
4. Digital transformation



Transparent and Accountable Government

1. Advocate for a monthly performance scorecards
2. Improved governance and rigorous review of investments and spending
3. Eliminate nepotism
4. Enforce codes to change behaviour



Enabled Services

1. Transition to a Paperless Government (where applicable)
2. Update and enhance website to be resident enabled (i.e. Newark)
3. Consolidate functions and eliminate non-essential services where possible to reinvest in value-added services and initiatives
4. Become a more efficient government



Responsive Enforcement

1. Champion Quality of Life initiatives that stresses code enforcement and visual blight reduction
2. Partner with State and National officials to put more police on the street
3. Establish a Problem Response Team (PRT) to address, track and prioritize reported issues



BUILD THE FOUNDATION FOR A BETTER PATERSON

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BUILD THE FOUNDATION

1

Local leaders (elected officials, community leaders, business people, etc.) must **define a collective vision** for the future of the city - this has to be a **collaborative** effort

2

The culture must change from reactive and ad hoc to one that is **proactive** and **planning-based**

3

It is imperative that we create a **Five Year Strategic Plan** for the city. It will enable us to obtain our vision - I plan to advocate for one with my council members and the Mayor



CASE STUDY

Fort Lauderdale, FL:

- **Population:** 178,752
- **Education:** Large percentage with only High School Education
- **Similar Challenges:** Homelessness, Blight, Transportation, Crime Reduction

In 2013, Fort Lauderdale embarked on outlining their vision for the next 20 years (they did so previously as well):

- Spent two-and-half years on citywide visioning initiative
- Accumulated 1,562 unique ideas from the collective community
- Prioritized initiatives based on interest and feedback
- Developed a foundation (their vision plan - **Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale**) around six key initiatives
- Developed a 5 year Strategic Plan: **Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2018** to begin the journey toward their vision of the city in 2035.
 - o Plan included 12 goals, 38 objectives, 191 strategic initiatives and 142 key performance indicators



“A strategic plan is a systematic process by which a community anticipates and plans for its future.”

– Dr. Gerald Gordon

Author, Strategic Planning for Local Government

"A vision is your definition of the future for the city. A strategic plan is what enables the pathway to the future. It identifies those things you need that will move the city forward. It also helps to operate and run the city according to agreed upon goals and priorities for the city."

- MW



**ENGAGE
THE COMMUNITY**

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“Broad participation by residents in government and public life strengthens democracy and governance at the local level, resulting in a more informed and inclusive community built on trust that can more effectively meet the needs of all stakeholders.”

Source: National League of Cities

DID YOU KNOW?

1

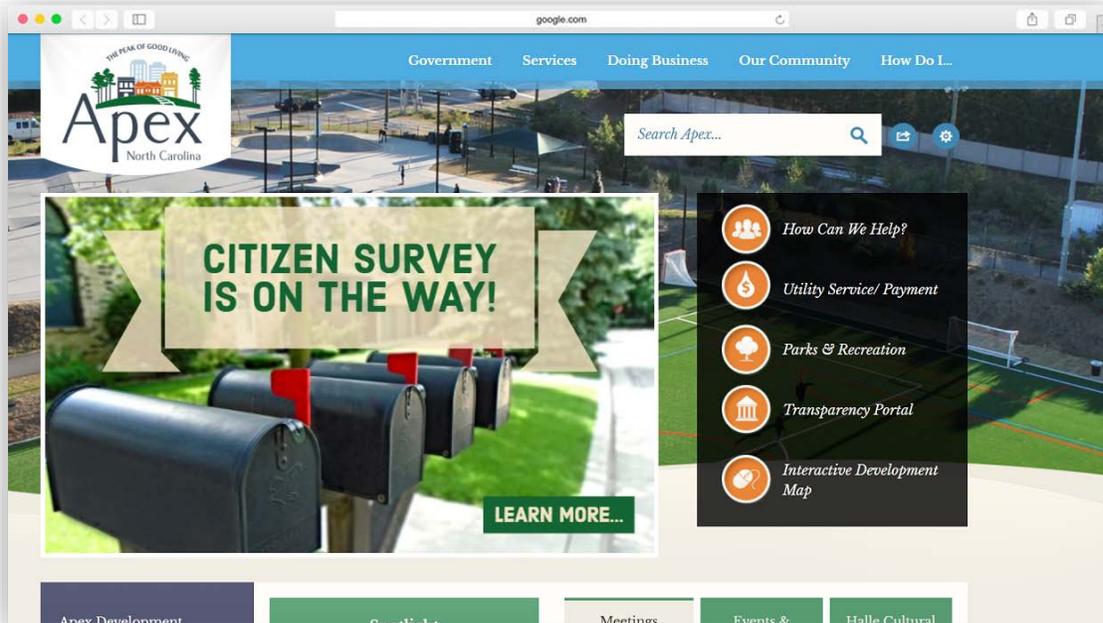
That over \$16M of your tax dollars will go toward paying off debt every single year.

2

Most of the money that has been borrowed rarely benefits the taxpayers and residents directly.

“We aren’t saying that we should be borrowing more, what we are saying is that our borrowing should be responsible and residents should have a say in how their tax dollars are spent.”

CASE STUDY



Apex, NC Info:

- Population 47,349
- Located just 15 Miles outside of Raleigh, NC
- In August 2015, TIME magazine ranked Apex #1 on its list of the nation's top places to live.

Responsible Application of Bond Usage

During the November 2017 election, the city of Apex placed a Bond Referendum on the ballot to borrow \$48M for parks and recreations.

Result:

- Apex residents supported the Parks Bond with a 76% approval rate during the November 7, 2017 general election
- Bond amount up to **\$48M** for use in the development of parks and recreation amenities
- Property taxes increased slightly to cover the cost of the paying the debt

Source: <https://www.apexnc.org/>

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There is no community without the people.



54%

Paterson taxpayers cover over 54 percent of the budget

AND

0%

of the input on how their dollars are spent or invested

WE WILL MAKE A BETTER PATERSON

As I have stated previously, A Better Paterson is not an “I” thing, it is a “WE” THING. As Council-at-large, I plan to advocate or initiate the following:

- Establish a Community Ward Council (CWC) that will meet monthly and would represent our 6 wards and the diverse ethnicities that live within them
- Initiate quarterly Community Government Education (GCE) Forums to help citizens better understand how our government works, how to get help and how to remain engaged
- Create a plan for youth engagement model for city government
- Initiate an Education Commission Board
- Begin various community forums, roundtables, and other information gathering platforms to obtain information about those things that are most important to residents and what our residents believe our priorities should be
- Work with my colleagues on the council and the Mayor to advocate for the development of a citywide vision and plan for the future



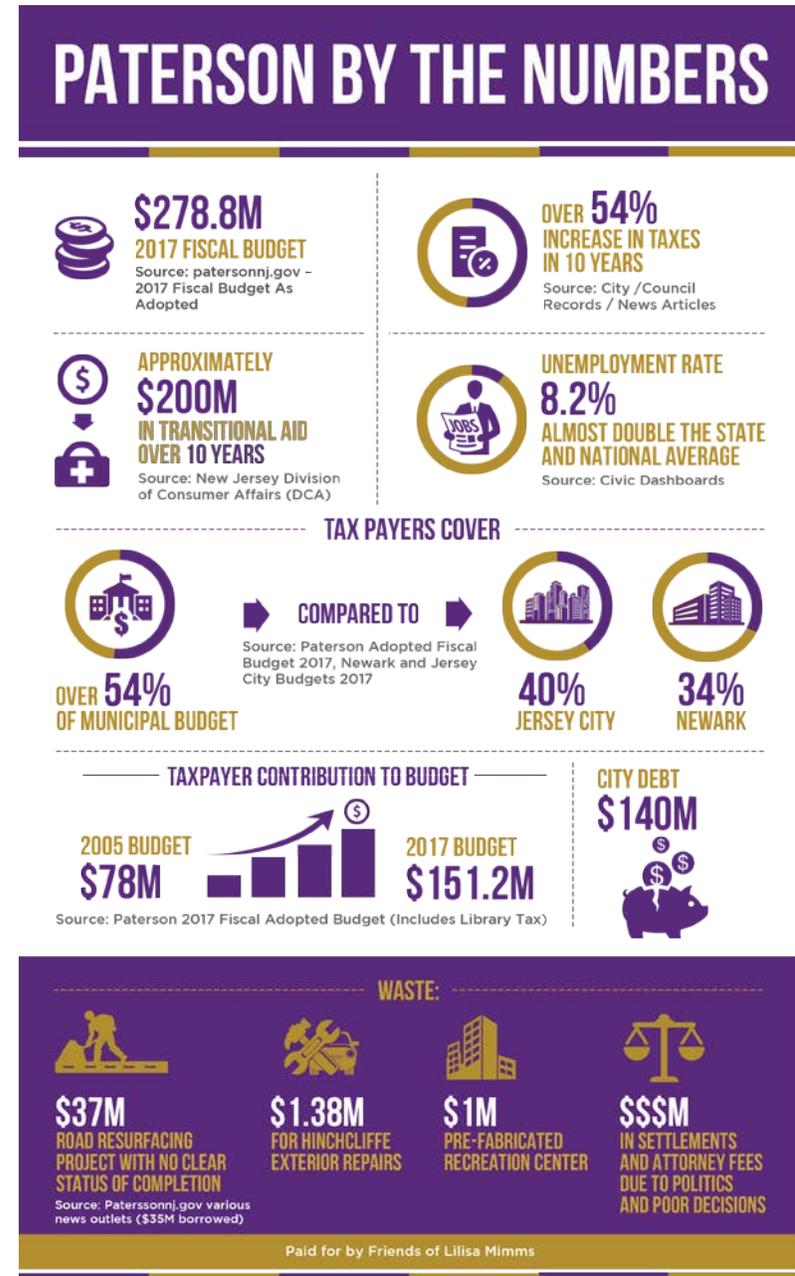
TRANSFORMATIVE THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

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GOOD GOVERNMENT REQUIRES CHANGE

The numbers are the numbers. They convey that Paterson is in need of change.

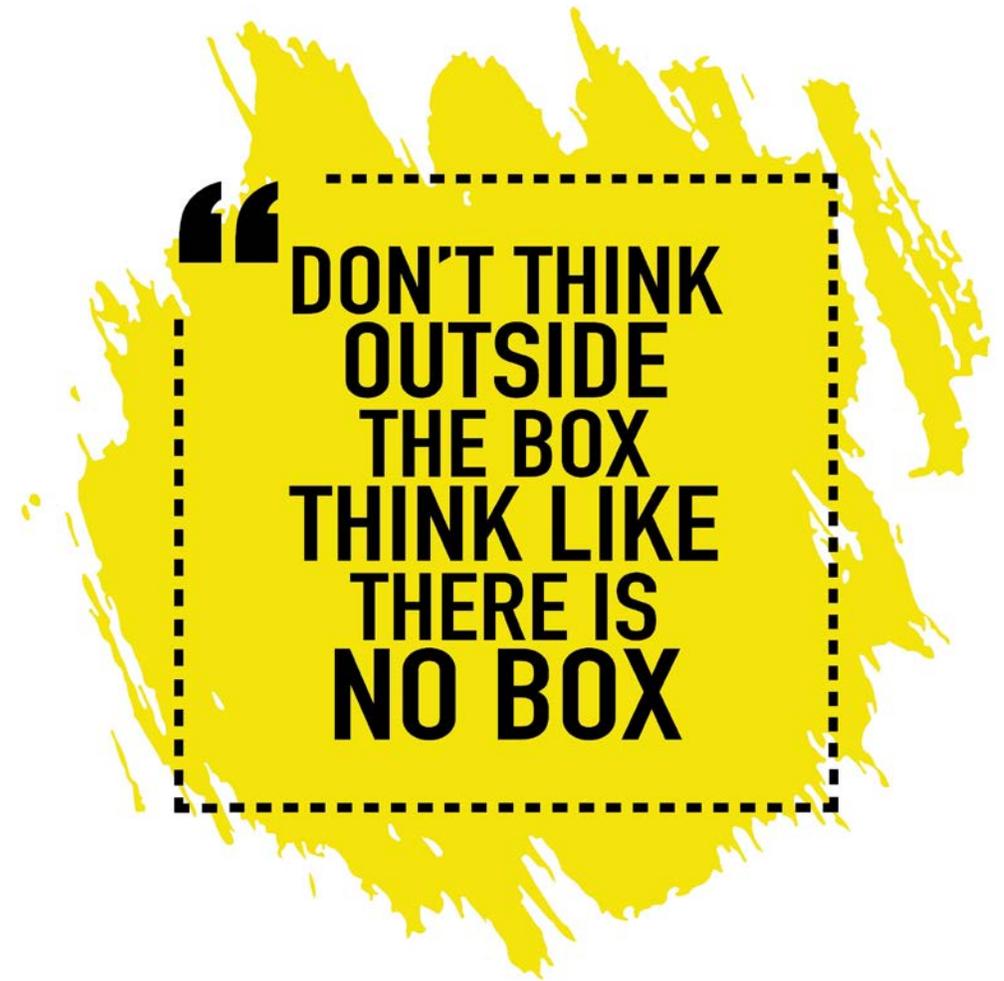
- **Change how Paterson Government is run:**
- Elect and support **visionary leaders** and change agents
- Operate government like a business and use a **Strategic Plan** as the guide
- Make investments and decisions based on **set priorities and the value** they provide to the people
- Establish a **Strategy and Planning Office** (call it what you like) to:
 - Curb wasteful spending
 - Manage the strategic planning process
 - Create and distribute monthly performance scorecards on Key Initiatives
 - Manage and oversee all capital investments and provide objective analysis on return on investments
 - Identify opportunities to reduce cost and reinvest those dollars in value-add initiatives (more cops, DPW Equipment, parks, etc.)
 - Track all grants and timelines to use the funds



THINK DIFFERENTLY TO ACHIEVE MEASURABLE IMPACT

- Include a clause and requirement that all developers or contractors with projects over **\$3M**, allocate **30 - 40%** of jobs to Paterson residents
- Immediately add **\$1M** to the recreation budget to support youth and seniors. Find a way - if we can find dollars for lawsuits and settlements yearly, we should be able to find money for recreation.
- Begin allocating **\$500K** a year for blight removal in 2019 Fiscal Budget
- Identify ways to turn over abandoned but well-conditioned properties to non-profits and others to service the community or house the homeless
- Leverage **Shared Services** with other municipalities and the county while working with developers, nonprofits, and businesses to identify ways to improve services while reducing costs to taxpayers
- If we are going to borrow, start a practice of **borrowing for things that directly benefit the community** (parks, community centers, homeless shelters, economic development, etc.)
- Revisit **Local Public Contracts Law** (LPCL) N.J.S.A. 40A:11 and determine whether there are opportunities to implement a Local Bid Preference (if within 5% of the lowest bidder) process to **provide opportunities for Paterson-based companies**. (i.e. Dallas, TX)
- Ensure contracts are awarded to **“lowest responsible and responsive bidder”** - which doesn't always mean the “lowest” bidder.

See [Dallas Bidding Preference Process](#)





LAW

REGULATION

COMPLIANCE

REQUIREMENTS

STANDARDS

TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT

TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT

1. I will advocate for monthly performance scorecards (i.e. Charlotte, NC)
2. We should look to freely publish monthly reporting on council member voting records without Open Public Records Act (OPRA) requirements
3. Improved governance and rigorous review of investments and spending
4. Push for resources to strengthen our code enforcement
5. Challenge peers and the Mayor on more transparency and community involvement





GOVERNMENT

SEARCHING PROCESS 100%



ENABLED SERVICES

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BECOME A DIGITALLY ENABLED CITY

Revamp website and make it resident enabled:

- Online payments
- Electronic Forms
- eSignatures
- Online Reports (potentially scorecards, voting records, etc.)

Benefits:

- Faster services and collection of payments
- Enhanced database and less paper handling
- Reduced costs
- Easier for residents and businesses to work with the city



City of Newark, New Jersey:

- Used Seamlessgov to convert paper forms to digital
- Moved manual services online
- More efficient government
- Convenient and save times
- Website is resident enabled
- User interface is clean, simple and well-organized

A wooden gavel and a pair of metal handcuffs are shown on a dark, textured surface. The gavel is on the left, and the handcuffs are on the right. The image has a purple and blue color overlay.

RESPONSIVE ENFORCEMENT

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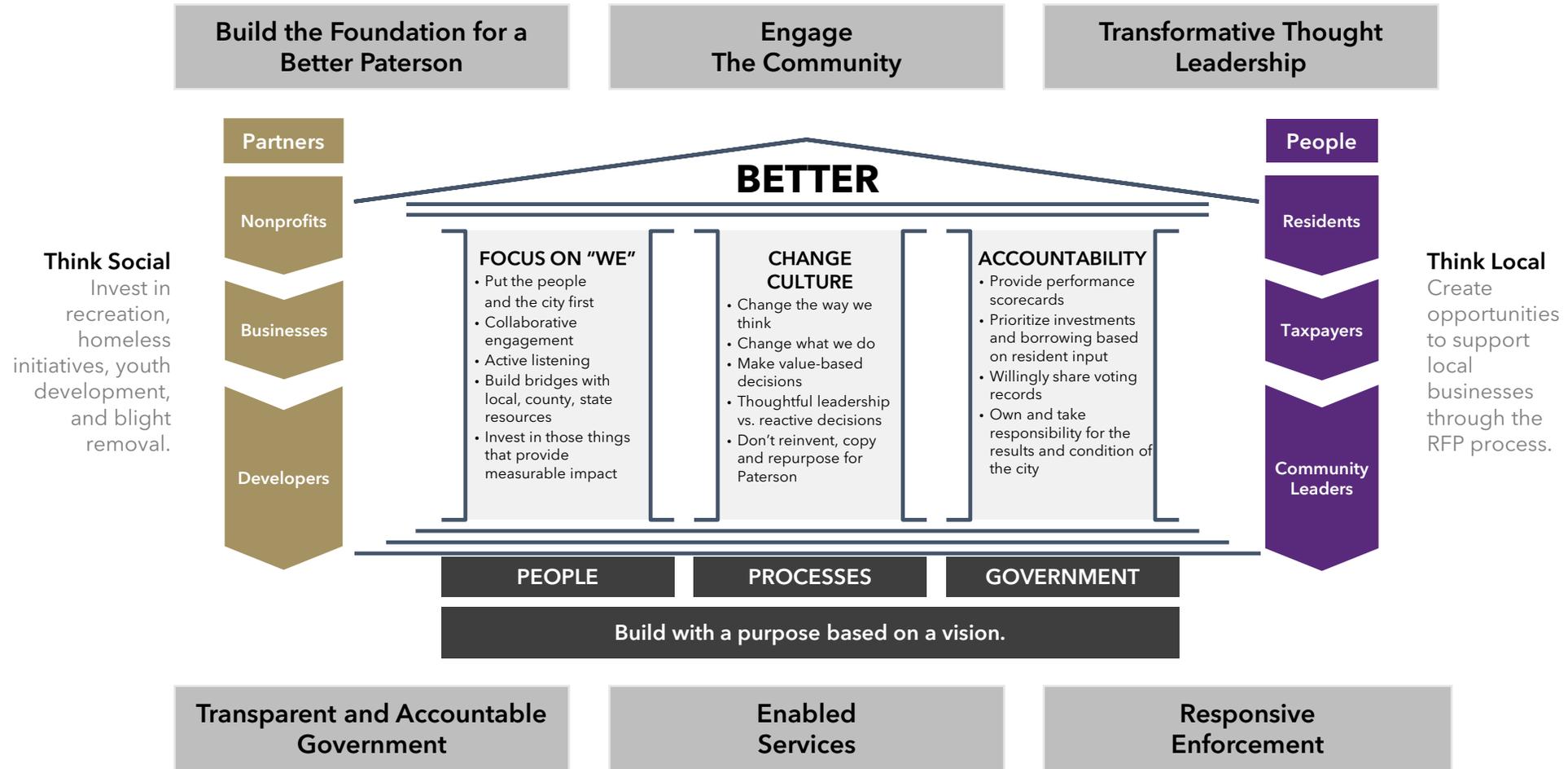
CODE ENFORCEMENT

Effective and responsive code enforcement is critical to improving safety and the quality of life for Paterson residents.

- Establish a Problem Response Team (PRT) to address, track and prioritize code violations and progress of remediation efforts
- Hire or divert more staff to the department
- Increase the enforcement of codes already documented
- Evaluate current statues and ordinances for relevance or in need of modifications
- Partner with state and national officials to put more police on the street

BUILDING A BETTER FOUNDATION FOR PATERSON

“Everything starts with a vision and then a thoughtful plan to achieve the vision.”



The Community



Key Partners



Foundational Building Blocks



Important Imperatives for BETTER

THE PATH TO BETTER TAKES COMMITMENT

Some results can occur within a year by just changing the way we think

BETTER	Timeframe in Years	Commentary
Build the Foundation for a Better Paterson	0 ● ————— ▼ ————— ● 5 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gather community input and prioritize the date would take roughly 1-2 years
Engage the Community	0 ● ————— ▼ ————— ● 5 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement in how the government runs, what it invests in and when, can occur now
Transformative Thought Leadership	0 ● ————— ▼ ————— ● 5 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural change takes time, so does processes and changing to good governance
Transparent and Accountable GVT.	0 ● ————— ▼ ————— ● 5 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transparency isn't difficult, the leaders just must decide to do so
Enabled Services	0 ● ————— ▼ ————— ● 5 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digitizing government, and shifting services and form to online will reduce costs, enable residents and make the city more efficient
Responsive Enforcement	0 ● ————— ▼ ————— ● 5 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding the dollars to increase code enforcement will be critical for remediating many challenges in Paterson

Note: All initiatives can start now, however, many will take time to implement completely



A woman with short dark hair and glasses is sitting at a desk, focused on writing in a notebook with a pen. She is wearing a light-colored, textured turtleneck sweater. The background is a blurred office environment with warm lighting and a window showing a cityscape at night. A small potted plant and a bottle of orange juice are on the desk in front of her.

**NOW LET'S TALK
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

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“Economic Development is a program, group of policies, or activity that seeks to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community, by creating and/or retaining jobs that facilitate growth and provide a stable tax base.”

Source: International Economic Development Council (IEDC)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / GROWTH

“Before making investments in time, dollars and physical resources, make sure the project(s) align with a broader vision for the city.”

Discussed Economic Development and Growth Opportunities to apply the \$105-\$130M State Tax Credit

- Mixed Use Hospital Mall/Center
- Expansion of Center City Mall with Soccer Field
- Great Falls
- Development near a Train Station



PHASE 1

Identify opportunities based on current assets and vision for the city. Not the vision of developers.

PHASE 2

Prioritize and evaluate risk vs. return which includes community benefit and interest

PHASE 3

Build something the people will want; it is a win-win for the city and developers; it create jobs

PHASE 4

Recognition of the creation of new jobs, new tax ratables, business growth, and improved quality of life

PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Economic Development without a vision and a set of priorities is just dumb.

- 1 Recognize assets
- 2 Plan and set priorities
- 3 Enhance capacity
- 4 Apply resources strategically
- 5 Reduce risk and cost
- 6 Ensure a return on investment
- 7 Create a competitive environment
- 8 Manage, monitor and measure

"I honestly don't know the details to many of the plans - not much has been shared publicly, however, I do know that before we invest in another debacle like the current Center City or pre-fabricated recreational centers, we need to ensure that they align with the priorities of the people and that they benefit the people that ultimately pay for them.

- Lilisa Mimms

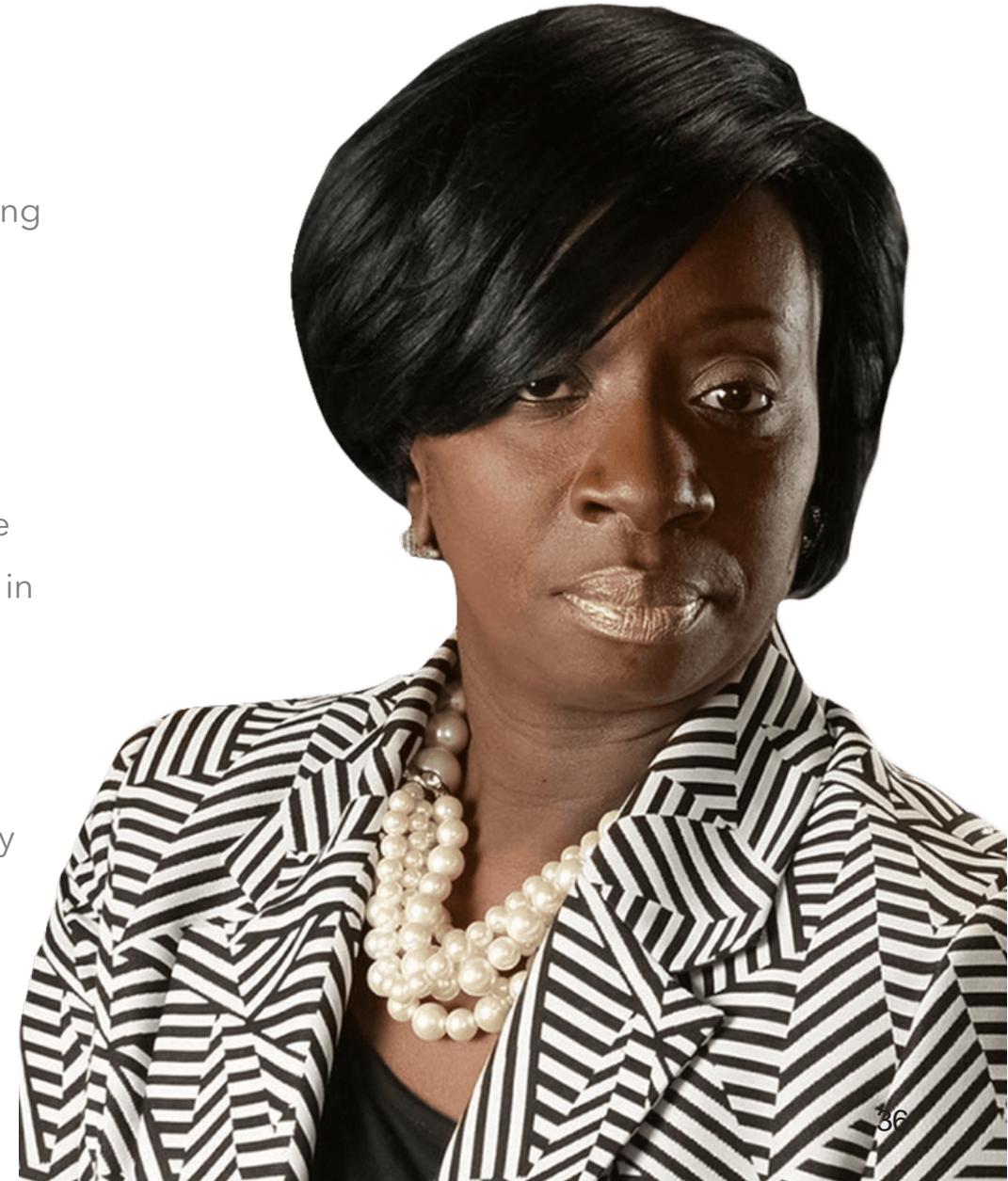
DR. LILISA MIMMS

Change requires all of us. As a council member, I will be accountable for doing my part. To change and begin the path to BETTER, we need a systematic approach of hearing and collecting ideas and solutions and then a plan to reach BETTER.

Clearly, I have some ideas and solutions of my own, however, WE must move this city forward together. It will take all of us. We can learn from other cities in addition to learning from each other.

This is our city, so it must be our vision, our priorities, and our plan for a path to BETTER. It's time to put the residents and city of Paterson first by becoming an engaged, efficient and effective government.

- Dr. Lilisa Mimms, Candidate for Council-at-large



CONCLUSION

Every progressive city has these things in common:

- B** **Built a Foundation** by defining its vision and a strategic plan to achieve its vision
- E** **Engage the Community** for ideas, priorities and in the decision-making process
- T** **Transformative Thought Leadership** was applied by visionary leaders and good talent
- T** The leaders embraced the concept of a **Transparent and Accountable Government**
- E** They **enabled services** by digitizing routine services; making their website and online presence citizen enabled and becoming a more efficient government
- R** The cities embraced a culture of **responsive enforcement** to address code irregularities, blight, clean streets and improving quality of life challenges.

THANK YOU



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A PATH TO BETTER

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