



The

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 2015

Dear Residents and Stakeholders:

Within its four square miles, East Orange offers the best of urban and suburban living. From historic homes and tree-lined streets to upscale high rise apartments with some of the best views of the Manhattan skyline, East Orange is truly a bustling city rich with history and small town appeal.

Unfortunately, this perspective of East Orange is not always shared by the approximately 3,000 train commuters and nearly 40,000 drivers who travel through our main corridors daily. In April of last year, we established a Quality of Life Task Force, comprised of multiple departments, to change this perception and to clean up our city.

I am constantly reminded that East Orange was once known as the “Cleanest City in America” and I am doing everything I can to bring our city back and set the standard for urban excellence. In 2014, seizing an opportunity to capitalize on a state law recently established to hold banks accountable for foreclosed properties, we established a Vacant and Abandoned Properties Division. The division, under the Department of Property Maintenance, is operated by personnel solely dedicated to identifying, registering and collecting fines on these properties. Using a strategic nine-step plan, Rutgers University-trained code enforcement inspectors, meticulous documentation, and state-of-the-art technology, the program is aggressively combating urban blight. To date, we’ve identified over 750 properties and tracked down 274 owners. The bottom line is: We don’t want to fine people, we want people to keep our city clean.

At the beginning of July, we went a step further, and launched a Neighborhood Clean Up Initiative. This new effort puts residents to work to clean up these 700 plus properties. We are not waiting for someone else to do the job. We are doing it ourselves. Created in conjunction with the Departments of Property Maintenance, Public Works, Planning and the Mayor’s Office of Employment and Training, this program supplies the manpower and equipment needed to tackle this issue and restore pride in our community.

Our efforts have garnered statewide and national attention because we are taking proactive steps to make East Orange realize its full potential. Rest assured that we won’t rest on our laurels until the job is done. As we continue to revitalize our city, we encourage residents and businesses to continue to partner with us to make East Orange a great place to live, work and play.


Mayor Lester E. Taylor III