

## **Budget Opening Statement**

Good morning, Madam Chair/Mister Chairman, and members of the committee. Thank you for this opportunity to address the challenges facing the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission and our plans going forward.

Our mission is straightforward. We serve the people of New Jersey by keeping New Jersey drivers safe and by delivering excellent customer service.

First, I have to acknowledge the work of the fine people at the MVC, as they process over 24 million transactions every year, for 6.4 million eligible drivers and 7.6 million registered vehicles. The MVC is the face of state government, touching more New Jerseyans on a regular basis than any other agency, and I have been fortunate over the past six weeks to have met a number of the dedicated employees who make that work.

### **Our challenges.**

The Motor Vehicle Commission faces significant challenges in the year ahead. You are all aware that we are dealing with an outdated IT infrastructure. No change, from the addition of a specialty license plate to the revision of a question on a signature pad, can be done without difficulty. And we've made some hard choices to ensure that the REAL ID project gets the priority it deserves.

We also face challenges in our agencies. Although our 54.5 hours of operation each week are more than New Jersey has ever offered, and more than any of our neighboring states, we still have agencies that lack the floor space and/or parking to fully serve their communities, and on our late nights and Saturdays we can see lines out the door.

As we go forward, I am placing a priority on addressing these challenges. We look forward to working with the legislature to ensure that we lead the way in providing the high quality of service that the people of New Jersey deserve.

With that, I'd like to take you through an overview of some of our plans and initiatives for Fiscal Year 2019.

### **REAL ID.**

In Fiscal Year '18, REAL ID has been the primary initiative of the MVC. The team has made tremendous progress toward finishing the REAL ID project. While the Commission had set an internal goal to issue our first REAL ID prior to the end of our current extension, the Department of Homeland Security has recommended, based on their experience with other states, that we request an additional extension. Our projected timeline is very close to the end of the current extension, so we have agreed to DHS's recommendation and will be filing for an additional extension at our next Quarterly Review with them this summer.

This extension will not impact our internal sense of urgency to complete the REAL ID project by the end of Calendar Year 2018, but it will allow us to do a full slate of testing prior to "going live." Executing this project with excellence is the best way to serve New Jerseyans, and that is our primary goal.

### **Accessibility.**

Part of our responsibility to deliver excellent customer service is to recognize the diversity of our state, and to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all of our residents. For the first time in six years, at my direction, the annual updated Driver Manual will be issued in Spanish as well as English.

This year we have also installed translator phones in all of our agencies to assist customers who are not English speakers.

### **Skip the Trip & Online Services.**

We will continue to seek out opportunities to shorten agency lines by encouraging our customers to use our online services. Currently there are more than 20 services offered via the MVC website. In FY '19, we will seek to increase usage of those services and to expand into online driver license renewals as well.

### **Renovation/Construction.**

However, some transactions will continue to require the customer to visit our agencies. As I said earlier, we have agencies that lack the floor space and/or parking to fully serve their communities, and we are actively working with the Division of Property Management & Construction (DPMC) to expand or re-locate

those agencies. Current projects include a new South Plainfield facility to replace the previously leased facility that closed in May, 2017, and a new agency in Delanco. The South Plainfield MVC should be opening in late May or early June and Delanco is scheduled to open in the fall.

### **Mobile Units.**

Our two mobile units started rolling last year, and are equipped to perform almost all of the transactions currently available in the agencies. Unfortunately, while these units have been operating, we've had to dedicate their utilization almost exclusively to Rahway and Edison, to manage the overflow from the closed South Plainfield facility. With the opening of the new facility, we will be able to deploy the mobile units more strategically and effectively around the state to high-volume locations and underserved areas.

### **Just Drive.**

Finally, I want to mention our Just Drive campaign against distracted driving. Everyone who spends any time on our roads knows that we have a problem with people distracted by dialing, texting, and talking on handheld phones. Our JustDrive campaign continues to educate the public about the dangers – for example, that texting while driving is as dangerous as drunk driving. In addition, our JustDrive sponsorships with college and professional sports teams allow us to provide information to young drivers and the general public not only on this topic, but on REAL ID, online services, and other information valuable to the people we serve.

Each of these initiatives bring us closer to our central goal of serving the people of New Jersey to the best of our ability each and every day. I look forward to working together to achieve that goal.

At this time, I'll take any questions you might have.