

Mayor's "FUN Agenda" for Economic Growth

Mount Vernon successfully celebrated signature events this weekend that were part of my "FUN agenda" for stimulating economic development through public attractions.

Saturday's Annual Fireworks show at Memorial Field and the Mount Vernon Arts Festival at the Mes Hall drew crowds of local families in need of entertainment options, but they also drew visitors from outside the city seeking new experiences.

The good news is that both events occurred safely, which sends the message that Mount Vernon can stage mega events without incidents. Even better news is that the fun will continue through the summer.

Events designed to deliver visitors to our City include the Wartburg's car and bike music show on July 20 at Brush Park, the Jamaica Independence Day concert on August 11 on S. 4th Avenue and the Brazilian Day celebration on August 18 on Stevens Avenue.

As I explained last week, 21st-century urban development is about three buzz words: location, destination and experience. We've got the ideal location, we're becoming a destination and we're delivering the experiences. That's the formula for building Mount Vernon's brand and expanding customer bases for our local merchants.

We're leveraging fun to bring a new, inexpensive transportation option to Mount Vernon residents and visitors. Last week the New York State Legislature voted to legalize e-bikes and e-scooters, both of which are propelled by small electric motors controlled by riders with handlebar throttles.

The lawmakers' approval of e-bikes removes one obstacle to having bike-sharing in our City. We have already held discussions with the bike-sharing company LimeBike, but the legality of e-bikes delayed the introduction of the green-and-yellow bikes in Mount Vernon because LimeBike needed e-bikes and e-scooters to be part of the mix on our streets.

The e-bikes legislation is now on Gov. Andrew Cuomo's desk and we look forward to his signature. If the legislation is signed, I will ask my partners in the City Council to work with me to bring LimeBike to Mount Vernon. The public has already voted with their pedals, since many of the LimeBikes in neighboring Yonkers have wound up parked in Mount Vernon.

My FUN agenda is also targeting the film and television industries. Working through the Mount Vernon Industrial Development Agency, which I chair, we are preparing an outreach initiative designed to attract more location shoots to our City.

Mount Vernon is already successful in attracting productions. In 2017 a production crew rented the building at 519 S. Fifth Ave. for five months to shoot "Seven Seconds," which appeared on Netflix.

Some may consider location shoots an inconvenience when they consume street parking or partly close public buildings, but the film crews' presence brings revenues. The film crews not only pay the City permit fees to shoot here, but also buy materials from our local merchants when they need unexpected supplies.

If the film crews decide to shoot on private property, then it's a bigger win because they pay rent to the owners of the buildings they are using. So get ready for our close-up, because Mount Vernon's location near the film and television recording studios in New York City make us an obvious choice for location scouts.

There's nothing random about our strategy. Fireworks, LimeBikes and film shoots advance our strategic plans like the [Canal Village Revitalization Plan](#), the Mayor's [Arts & Culture Plan](#) and the [NYU Tourism Plan](#) for Mount Vernon, all of which are intended to drive \$1 billion in new economy activity.

Whether we're talking about big parties drawing visitors to our local restaurants and stores, LimeBikes giving our residents less expensive transportation options or film crews paying the City to shoot on our streets, the big picture is Mount Vernon's steady renaissance. That rebirth is more evident every day.