**Speech Delivered in the State of the Nation Debate in the Senate, January 2019**

As leaders of the Capital City of Kingston, we wrestle with what constitute the greatest challenge to Kingston. We never ever administer without committing to understanding the challenges that confront our city; and usually the challenges are many. But they are foundational challenges that as leaders of the city of Kingston we ought not to be ignorant of. These foundational challenges are hardly ever visible, but unattended eat away at the foundations of cities and nations crushing them into the dust of history. Knowing this we must administer with vision, understanding and imagination.

Plato spoke of the need for the Philosopher King. Leaders that are able to understand and analyse certain intangibles that overtime demolish the grandeur of great cities. The philosopher King, the thinking leader, the thoughtful administrator is able to medicate to health cities and nations. Therefore, the greatest challenge confronting capital city, Kingston is the wisdom to be able to see the pathways before us and knowing their ends. On the one hand the path that leads to the Grand Era of Kingston, the Pearl of the Antilles, the light of the Caribbean Sea. On the other hand, paths that leads to a fatigued city.

The greatest challenge the city faces is that of apathy and distraction. Why is distraction so dangerous and constitute a challenge to Kingston. The answer is, it hides from us the most important questions regarding the sprouting and flourishing of our Kingston. These are questions that if left unasked and unanswered would surely bring about the demise of our city. So, there are questions that demand our attention hidden from us by millions of distractions.

How do we move pass the unconcern, the indifference and the distractions and get our residents to focus their attention on the transformations that are necessary to move Kingston into the Grand era?

The imagination is the antidote. In the city of Kingston we want to create a generation of young people with the imaginative faculties wel-developed. A Kingston where the imagination dominates. The municipalities believes that the sprouting and flourishing of Kingston will be attained on the platform of the imaginative mind. The mind of the city of Kingston. So, today the most important foundation we can lay is to answer the question, how can we make the imaginative, the mind of Kingston. Why is this important? The imagination is capable of apprehending and embodying reality. It is critical in informing reason and reason is in turn informed by it. The imagination is that faculty that gives shape to thought. Thought has to have shape in order to make sense to our residents.

Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, all that God has prepared for those who love Him. Can you imagine it? Can you imagine Kingston? The Pearl of the Antilles, the light of the Caribbean Sea. It is imagining Kingston that will stir the interest of the residents of the city. We can never flourish as the Pearl of the Antilles, the light of the Caribbean Sea and a major player on the Latin American landscape without shared interest within the city. So we are committed to making the mind of Kingston, the imaginative mind.

Mr President, we would also like to take this opportunity to bring some policy approaches to your attention that we believe are essential to providing effective and efficient delivery of services and raising the quality of life of our residents.

Firstly, City managers and urban planners must adopt a future-oriented ***and long term outlook in policy formulation.*** Why Future? Why Long term? This will help us to avoid the pitfalls of making decisions that might be expedient in the short term but prove costly later on.

**Secondly**, we ought to build flexibility in our urban planning regim**e**. We live in an environment which demands that we always raise questions relating to assumptions. At the Municipality we are developing the mind-set that is always willing to reverse decisions if those decisions are flawed and based on wrong assumptions. We are committed to developing within the public sector a culture of always seeking to do things better and cheaper. We ought to understand that *public sector culture* affects how civil servants, public officers and politicians carry out their responsibilities.

**Thirdly,** In a climate of limited resources and limited sources of revenues we are framing the mind in always seeking to find solutions that maximize the effectiveness of scare municipal resources. Maximizing the effectiveness of scare municipal resources is paramount to the efficient delivery of services and enhancing the quality of life of our residents. It is critical in confronting the many and varied urban challenges to create a livable, sustainable and resilient city.

**Fourthly,** we are focused on a results oriented approach to policy making in urban governance. We strongly believe that an unsentimental and pragmatic focus on results would lead to the efficient provision of services to the public. We seek to resolve urban challenges through the utilization of policies grounded on the proper assessment of the likely or logical outcomes of those policies (we have to outwork the policies to ensure the policies are attaining the results desired). A result oriented approach to governance requires careful thought and assessment. We always take the time to examine the performance of existing policies and discard or rework to obtain better results.

In building the city of Kingston we believe the agencies of government must emphasize alignment so that our efforts are coordinated and not fragmented. This is absolutely necessary in a changing and complex environment. The public service needs to be aligned to respond to changing circumstances. We have to look at cities as systems in which everything is interconnected or interdisciplinary. Modern urban and municipal challenges fall outside existing organizational boundaries. They tend to involve multiple dimensions. Enhanced coordination gives us our best chance of addressing these challenges well.

Now let us end with theTangibles:-

According to a Study conducted by Ernst & Young; one of the “Big Four” accounting firms globally; the economic value of 11 creative sectors to the global economy was 2,250 Billion US Dollars. The Highest earners being Television, Newspapers and Magazines and Visual Arts.

The study went further to show that revenues from the creative industries; exceeded that of Telecommunications and even surpassed the entire GDP of one of the largest populations in the World; India.

Now Jamaicans know the Digicel and Flow are among the largest corporations in the Island; well today, we are saying that the Creative Industry has the potential to eclipse both. Television, Visual Arts, Newspapers and Magazines, Advertising, Architecture, Books, Performing Arts, Gaming, Movies, Music and Radio are among the top creative industries across the globe. The data show that the creative industries generate significant employment among the youth population and also that these jobs are less likely to be impacted by automation. Research shows that approximately 87 percent of these jobs in the United Kingdom and the United States is less likely to be affected by automation. Jamaica has barely begun to scrape the surface of our Creative Potential and has hardly made a dent in the creative industry compared to our potential.

Unemployment has fallen to record lows in Jamaica with the latest data from STATIN showing unemployment at 8.4%. Having barely scraped the surface of the creative industries; which Ernst & Young considers to be one of the highest employers globally; it is frightening the successes and achievements that we can attain. Mr President, the Most Honourable Prime Minister Andrew Holness stated that Jamaica can attain full employment and we agree with him; especially if we include the creative industries.

We have not tapped into film, advertising, visual arts, literature and gaming in the way we can truly benefit yet. I would go even further to say we have yet to even fully capitalize on music.

But to do this we need the skills and the foundations. We need persons who are exposed and trained. The KSAMC has already begun to move in this direction and we will be making some announcements soon on this. We will have trained creatives in Kingston to benefit from this industry and grow the local economy.

Likewise; we are partnering with the Kingston Creatives Art District Team to establish a functional and organized community of local talent that will help to transform our city. Why? We know the benefit of the industry.

Where music is concerned; Kingston is the home of Reggae. The City recorded 14.8% increase in revenues from the entertainment industry for party permits for the period January to November 2018 when compared to the same period in 2017. We take this opportunity to commend events promoters who are at the cutting edge of their business. They have been creating entertainment products that appeal to a wide cross section of persons both locally and abroad. We encourage them to continue in this regard and to continue to be at the forefront in creating entertainment products with appeal to different types of persons.

**Entertainment zones and the Night-time economy musrt begiven serious consideration if we are to generate employment and promote growth in the city.**  We cannot speak about entertainment zones the the night-time economy and creating entertainment products and not understand the link between these and employment, business opportunities and growth in the city.

We take this opportunity to thank the Most Honourable Prime Minister, Andrew Holness and his government for the road improvement and expansion works taking place across the municipality of Kingston and St Andrew. This is most important in terms of urban mobility. Urban mobility is an issue we take seriously and must continue to plan for if we are to create a livable, sustainable and resilient city for future generations of our children.

Mr President, let us turn to the issue of a multi-functional transport center in the heart of the commercial district downtown. The current bus terminus at Waterlane is not the ideal location for a transport center. It sits on the Waterfront which spans the entire distance from Rae Town Fishing village to the Headquarters of the Marine Police. This is critical real estate which has far greater value to the people of Kingston and St Andrew if used otherwise. The properties of the people of Kingston & St Andrew must be used and disposed of in ways that maximise the benefits to our residents.

Mr President, we know some will argue that what to become of the huge investment in the bus terminus? Our answer is simple, what would reap the greatest rewards to our residents over the next 20 to 30 years. Is it to keep the bus terminus as is or is it to abandon the bus terminus and invite the quality investments that would be appropriate for such properties on the Waterfront. This Mr President, is the preferred view in light of the developments now taking place along the Waterfront.

We therefore recommend that a new Transport Center be constructed on adjoining lands owned by the municipality on Pechon Street and Darling Street. The current locations of the Rural Bus Terminus and Pechon Street terminus. This would ber sandwiched by the Coronation Market and the future Lifestyle Center and an easier walk from Parade. This new Transport Center would have a variety of shops and restaurants to enhance business activity and aesthetics. This idea is part of the vision to relocate all buses out of the Parade area and to transform parade into a historical and cultural space for our residents.

The Parade area was built into the design of Kingston since 1692. It sits at the center of the original Kingston. It’s the intersection of Kings Street running from north to South and Queens Street running from East to West. Parade is a space of historical significance in the city of Kingston. There we have the Ward Theatre and before the Ward Theatre the space was a theatre space since the 1750s. We have also the Simon Bolivar Cultural Center, Coke Methodist Church, Kingston Parish Church, St William Grant Park, and in the vicinity Liberty Hall and the Houses of Parliament. This is a space that is rich in history. We must take the decision to protect this rich history and that is why we are recommending that the space be transformed into a recreational/historical space for our resident. It must be a space that our residents can find leisure and relaxation and interact with our history.

Mr President, we now move to the issue of height restrictions. We believe that there must now be serious discussions with respect to the issue of height restriction. It might be easier to have these restrictions in residential areas such as Red Hills, Sterling Castle, while in the urban centers we do it based on analysis. Meaning, we would evaluate on a case by case basis based on analysis provided with respect to soil bearing capacity reports and supporting engineering designs and solutions. Engineering solutions have been giving rise to building heights above 300m and ranging towards 1000 meter across the globe. Mr President, we are not even suggesting for now buildings above 100m. So, the buildings we are talking about would in no way even approach 120 meter. let us begin the discussion on this very important issue.

Mr President, thank you very much for affording me the time to make this my few remarks.