

Good morning everyone. I am delighted to welcome you to the great City of Waterbury and one of the finest theaters in the Northeast, Waterbury's Palace Theater. Thank you all for being here to join us as we host NVision 2020, a discussion about the future - and what it can hold for this region.

As Chairman of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, I am excited to host this conference today: to create a new vision for our future, where infrastructure and technology - transportation and bandwidth - bring a new prosperity to our corridor.

There are a tremendous number of positive things going on throughout the Naugatuck Valley Region. Working together with a private sector that is searching for lower-cost, higher quality business locations in the Northeast, we have been tireless in our efforts to transform our region into an even more valuable location for business and investment.

From Shelton to Bethlehem, across to Bristol, down to Cheshire, and back to Fairfield County, the new Naugatuck Valley Region represents the whole of Connecticut, urban, suburban and rural. As the largest city in the Corridor, the City of Waterbury holds the key to unlocking the value tied up in its infrastructure.

I have focused these past four years on marketing Waterbury to the development community and fighting for the public investments that will make us a premier destination for business. However, it is not just Waterbury - All of our communities have so many things to be proud of in this regard:

- Shelton has shown the way in reclaiming and rebuilding its waterfront with 500 new condominiums and apartments that have attracted young professionals who have revived its entertainment and restaurant trade.
- Naugatuck is negotiating public/private partnerships to redevelop the area between its train station and downtown into a mixed-use Transit-Oriented Development.
- Bristol just announced a partnership to turn Depot Square into a medical complex with a strong commercial development component that will create 300 jobs and generate retail demand in its downtown,
- Ansonia, Derby, Wolcott and Thomaston are just some of our other towns and cities taking the initiative and seeing renewed interest in their accessible commercial and industrial sites.

Public investments must continue in the things that connect us regionally and globally, especially with regard to Transportation and Technology.

A big part of that involves addressing certain issues from our past. Like many cities in the Northeast, Waterbury was home to some of the most prominent industries of the past 200 years, notably Brass. Throughout this Valley, we manufactured metals, rubber and plastics. We shipped machine parts, timepieces and precision tools around the world.

We have had to become adept at addressing the industrial legacy of our past: the Brownfields sites where many of these plants were located.

In Waterbury, we have been working toward this goal for the last four years - taking the legacy of our 20th century manufacturing and making new public investments to clear these sites, equalize their value with clean sites, and make them available for private development. We have the confidence of both the state and federal governments who are investing with us in restoring our economic base.

We have leveraged these investments to put the cost of these properties in line with their actual value. It is very difficult to market a site, no matter how good its location, if there's an uncertain cleanup cost. When we take remediation out of the equation, we see major progress.

Recycling these urban properties gives the taxpayers the best bang for their economic development buck. Working with my counterparts across the Naugatuck Valley, we have cataloged every site that needs work, inventoried the remediation each one requires and the scheduled timelines for returning them to the marketplace.

The Regional Brownfields Partnership, which Waterbury belongs to, has been helping bring about these types of turnarounds for properties throughout our region for nearly 20 years.

However, the market we are selling to is a much different one than the economy that supported the heavy industries of before. Transportation and Technology are the keys to this new market.

All indicators and trends show that most young people prefer to be in walkable, urban areas where they can both live and work, where technology is all around them and all their needs are convenient to a bus or train ride. The marketplace has demonstrated that business is following them and accelerating this trend toward re-urbanization.

For the last 40 years, the suburbanization of our society drove business from the cities to the suburbs as globalization drove industry and manufacturing overseas. Now, business is reversing field, shifting away from suburban office parks and moving back to the cities.

We must again invest in ourselves if we hope to compete for the businesses of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. If we make these investments, we can capitalize on our region's strengths and foster a regional economy based on one of Connecticut's strengths - Advanced Manufacturing.

According to an April 2015 study by the New England Council and Deloitte Consulting, Connecticut has a substantial edge in advanced manufacturing and biotech. With new investment in our transportation and technology networks, the Naugatuck Valley can exploit our advantages in connectivity, location and educated workforce to take advantage of the trend in re-urbanization.

Our region was at the forefront of promoting this industry segment - Naugatuck Valley Community College was one of only three state community colleges to establish a state of the

art, advanced manufacturing center back in 2012. That program has been turning out graduates who now are working for manufacturers throughout the region.

In fact, if you speak with any longtime manufacturing company in the area, they will tell you that a major reason they're here is our skilled workforce that meets their needs as well as, or better than any potential location.

We must also invest in the next generation. You may have noticed a large, multi-colored building on the hill to the north of I-84 on your way in this morning. That is the Waterbury Career Academy High School. We recognized that with a very limited number of slots for city students in area Vo-Tech schools, Waterbury's school system was missing a huge opportunity to fill local jobs. Not surprisingly, manufacturing is one of the most popular programs at that school.

There are great reasons for a business to operate in the Naugatuck Valley Region. We're a community comprised of strong, stable neighborhoods and our center-city – Waterbury – is the safest large city in Connecticut.

However, our ability to capitalize on all of this for the long-term lies in investments in connectivity. Everything from super-fast Internet, to transit networks, to walkable neighborhoods- this essential connection at all levels of the community serves to attract, incubate and grow business.

We have to make those investments in transit, high-speed rail and gigabit technology along the Naugatuck Valley Corridor to evolve our region into a 21<sup>st</sup> Century business destination.

We are fortunate to be located at the crossroads of two major highways, I-84 and Route 8. If you ask many of the businesses that are here, they will tell you that our location at the intersection of these highways is a big part of why they call the Valley home.

What I have learned over my years in government and my role as vice-chairman of the US Conference of Mayors Advanced Manufacturing Task Force is that the location of business is no longer just about cost, or even taxes. I've learned that those regions and governments who recognize how to capitalize on this shift in industry, and especially manufacturing, to grab a piece of the pie for themselves will be the communities most in demand in the future.

We are exactly the type of Corridor, with the right investments, that can become one of these new communities. We just need to recognize our assets and continue to invest in ourselves to create the conditions for business to grow and prosper.

Thankfully, the region has a tremendous partner in Governor Malloy when it comes to making investments in Brownfields and Transportation. Since I took office four years ago, we have worked with state (and federal) officials for the improvements to the Waterbury Branch Line

that are now underway and will bring increased ridership and connectivity to the entire region. Last year, a long-needed widening project of I-84, through Waterbury, began. The long-term future vision includes replacing the I-84 Mixmaster.

I cannot mention these transformative state transportation initiatives without thanking CT DOT Commissioner James Redeker; he is our partner in every way.

The federal government demonstrated unprecedented commitment and belief in our plans with the awarding of a \$19,400,000 TIGER grant, funding the WATER (Waterbury Active Transportation and Economic Resurgence) project. This will open the Freight Street Corridor and Downtown to the kind of Transit Oriented Development that will set the example of TOD for the rest of the region and increase property values, spurring private investment around all of our transit hubs.

We need to get behind the Transformative plans to add a Northern Route on the future Northeast Corridor high-speed rail system, establishing a true high-speed rail stop at the Waterbury Station, connecting to our Waterbury Branch Line Commuter rail at a key point between Boston and New York.

The second part of investing in ourselves is to make the single most important technology investment that will allow this highly connected region to become an advanced manufacturing center of the future: Gigabit Fiber Networking. This is an ultra-high speed Internet technology running at hundreds of times the speed of current connections, which draws companies to its hubs, makes the cost of business cheaper and the speed of business exponentially faster. The Naugatuck Valley Region has to be leading the charge to develop that technology here.

We must complete our Brownfields work to open up our vast network of riverfront infrastructure to new development along our commuter rail line and BRT systems.

The benefits of this are big, especially as we recoup the value of those older investments and put them back to work for a new generation. However, this also means not only cleaning Brownfields because there is a bankable deal on the table, but also reclaiming them for future development as parks and public spaces along our rivers. We need to continue to do projects like Waterbury's PAL Park – a former brownfield that is now a key site for recreational opportunities in the inner city.

All of this, my friends, is what we should envision for the future Naugatuck Valley Region. Public investments that attract businesses drawn to our easy connections around the state and throughout the DC to Boston Corridor. Enticed by an incomparably fast Gigabit technology, both manufacturers and small technology companies will want to be here, following the people who will want to live in our downtowns connected by convenient transit between our urban hubs.

I am proud to work with our partner communities in the greater Naugatuck Valley to build on our collective strengths and facilitate investment for an even stronger regional economy.

Let us make that destination the Naugatuck Valley once again.

**(Introduce Redeker)**