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In Re:
State Economic Strategy Plan Information Forum

DATE: JANUARY 29, 2008
HELD AT: WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE
UNIVERSITY
181 WHITE STREET
DANBURY, CT

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Reporter: Samantha M. Howell, LSR #00462

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IN ATTENDANCE:

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2
3 Commi ssi oner Joan McDonal d
4 Stan McMi llen
5 John Shu
6 James Smoder
7 Mark Nol and
8 Rudy Marcon
9 Andrea Gardner
10 Elizabeth Stocker
11 Christi ne Edwards
12 Steven Palmer
13 Hei di Green
14 Ken Danster
15 Jul ie Ann Becker
16 Vi ncent Mul vey
17 Jim Ball ano
18 Carol ine Si skark
19 Mi chael McGl oughl i n
20 Jane Darmi en
21 Tom Esposi to
22 Candi s Benyon
23 John Goodman
24 Patri ck Hardi ng
25 Joyce Barkel y
26 Wayne Shepard
27 Steven Bul l
28 Jerry Frederi ck
29 Marsha Hopki ns
30 Jason Hu

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1 (Forum commenced at 5:05p.m.)

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MS. MCDONALD: Good eveni ng, everybody.

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I'm Joan McDonal d, and I'm the Commi ssi oner of the

5 Department of Economic and Community Development. And I'm
6 joined by Stan McMillen, and some other DECD staff in the
7 back, and we're glad to see you here. Danbury has the
8 dubious distinction of being the tenth of our ten forums,
9 as we kick off our strategic economic development plan.
10 You actually were, I think, number two or number three; we
11 originally were scheduled to have this forum on December
12 13th, which is -- you may remember was the night of the
13 snowstorm. And we had some good foresight -- several of
14 us in the room -- to cancel it the evening before. And
15 we've also made sure that we locked in a date to have this
16 meeting with all of you.

17 So here it is, the end of December -- or the end of
18 January, sorry, it's getting later. We've had nine forums
19 so far around the State. We started in Torrington, we've
20 been in Groton, Willimantic, Middletown, Hartford, New
21 Haven, Bridgeport and Stamford. Did I miss anything? I
22 think I've got them all. And we've been hearing some very
23 good things from all of those communities, and the great
24 thing -- and I'm going to turn it over to Stan to talk
25 about the process and what we're doing, but the great thing

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1 is the enthusiasm that the various communities around the
2 State has for dealing with these issues that we have here
3 in Connecticut.

4 And one of the things I'd like to say is the glass is
5 half empty and the glass is half full, and it's really
6 capitalizing on those half full initiatives, and making
7 sure we collectively grapple with those issues that will

8 keep Connecticut competitive from an economic standpoint,
9 but also will insure that we maintain and preserve our
10 quality of life that we all treasure here in the State. So
11 with that, I'm going to turn it over to Stan, because we
12 really want to comment about this, but it's really about
13 you. We want to hear what you have to say as we shape our
14 strategic plan and our vision for the next five, ten and
15 twenty years. So with that, I'll turn it over to Stan.

16 MR. MCMI LLEN: Thank you, Commissioner, and
17 thank you ladies and gentlemen for coming out to the
18 Western Connecticut State University. It was Public Act
19 Code seven, dash, two three nine that asked the Department
20 of Economic Development to create a strategic plan for the
21 State of Connecticut. I'll talk a little bit more about
22 that, but the purpose of the forums is to gather
23 information for that.

24 We are required by the statute to have a great demand
25 for public outreach in order to build a vision. This is a

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1 public comment process, and I'll explain a little more
2 about that, as well. In addition, we've invited the
3 sixteen regional planning authorities to present their
4 CEDS, or the work process for the plan that's going into
5 their CEDS, and we're happy tonight to have John Shu
6 (phonetic), the executive director of the council elected
7 officials to present some overview of their ideas for their
8 vision.

9 The Public Act Code seven, dash, two three nine
10 requires DECD to create a strategic economic plan for the

11 State of Connecticut by July 1, 2009, and every five years
12 thereafter update that plan. There wouldn't be a strategic
13 economic plan if it wasn't updated. We have to host these
14 regional forums to collect public input to build our
15 strategic vision as to where we want to be five, ten,
16 fifteen, twenty years into the future. The plan is going
17 to serve as a road map for the next five, ten, fifteen,
18 twenty years on how we move this State from where we are to
19 a better place.

20 The Public Act requires that a plan establish clear
21 and measurable goals and objectives; otherwise, we won't
22 know how we're doing with respect to how we said we were
23 intending to do. So that's what we're about. The purpose
24 of the forums is to engage in open dialogue, to specify
25 your issues and concerns, and to have strategies to move

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1 Connecticut's economy forward.

2 I encourage you to think big, think outside the box.
3 Imagine you were queen and king for a day, and how you
4 would articulate what you would like Connecticut to look
5 like. Imagine what it would mean if we had -- to the rest
6 of the country, to the State, if we had the best
7 transportation system in our State, the best and most
8 affordable housing in the country. What would we look
9 like? How would you articulate that vision.

10 The factors -- and these are categories in which we
11 can pigeonhole our communities, our competitiveness, the
12 cost of doing business -- which involves regulatory
13 environment, energy costs and tax structure -- housing, as

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14 I mentioned, transportation, workforce and responsible
15 growth and development. I think of the strategic plan as
16 consisting of service and a conceptual overview. We need
17 to understand where we are so, (unintelligible) how did we
18 get, why are we here requires analysis and data. And many
19 of that exists, including the CEDS. We need to build a
20 vision as to where we want to be in the future, and then
21 build the process of designing strategies, and tactics and
22 metrics.

23 How we get from where we are to where we want to be is
24 a crucial part at the third leg of the school. So this
25 public comment process -- we have a transcription service,

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1 and the transcripts of these forums will appear on our web
2 site within about two weeks of each one. In addition,
3 written testimony will appear along with those transcripts.

4 As soon as I'm done, we'll have a five minute
5 presentation by Mr. Shu. All speakers are limited to three
6 minutes. Be specific as you can in that time frame as to
7 what your vision implies and the topic area. As I said,
8 think big and keep your eye on the vision. And you may
9 have an idea in the middle of the night, and don't feel
10 discouraged just because you didn't think of it now. So
11 there's an e-mail here, and this is an e-mail that I
12 respond to, so please don't necessarily limit your comments
13 to this forum. So with that, I would like to call Mr. Shu.

14 MR. SHU: Thank you, very much for coming
15 to Danbury. We really appreciate it. I'm John Shu with
16 the regional planning agency of Housatonic Planning

17 Council and Officials, and I'd like to provide some
18 overview on the area, and also some suggestions for the
19 plan.

20 We have to start by saying that greater Danbury is
21 relatively prosperous compared to many areas of the State,
22 and I hope that your plan will not take the reasoning that
23 we should target our resources towards the areas that are
24 on the low side, or have the most problems. It takes money
25 and resources and continuation to keep the good areas

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1 producing. We provide a lot of sales tax, a lot of other
2 revenue for the State. It won't happen without the
3 programs and the State's continuing commitment, so please
4 have some balance in that regard. And we are the golden
5 goose, and the golden goose needs some food to keep laying
6 those eggs. Okay.

7 I basically have nine points, and that's the first
8 one. The second one concerns growth rates around the
9 State. In the greater Danbury area, the last census was
10 ninety-eight thousand. Twenty-one percent of the State's
11 total poll was just in these ten towns. There was one
12 decade when it was fifty-nine percent. What's happening is
13 you're really in the metropolitan New York economy this
14 close to the New York border, sixty eight miles out of
15 Manhattan (unintelligible).

16 So when you make your decisions about resources,
17 please don't just consider making a split decision in areas
18 that are growing, you may have a state where each town
19 wants a little more money for business pockets. You can

20 see there's really enough capacity. I'm not looking
21 outside the municipal point of view, but here we may
22 actually need some expansion room. And that would be an
23 important point for us.

24 Number three, you have a chance with this plan to
25 coordinate your database development so that we can all

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1 know what's going on. And I think DECD has a way to go on
2 that. DOT, which I'm very familiar with, is really ahead
3 of you in that guide. If you can have your database so
4 that they're readily available to the regional planning
5 boundaries, that would help all of those that are concerned
6 with the economy and the regional level.

7 The CERC, Connecticut Economic Resource Center -- for
8 twenty-five hundred dollars recently prepared an economic
9 analysis that brought out our strengths and weaknesses of
10 our regional economy. We have trade, strengths, wholesale
11 trade information, information for new prospects,
12 information -- you think everybody's going why are we going
13 full steam? No. We already have a lot, so
14 (unintelligible). Health care and social assistance,
15 higher priority retention target, a little bit of a
16 problem.

17 So we just do that for ourselves. That cost
18 twenty-five hundred dollars. And, you know, putting aside
19 the money, what if the State says well, we can have such
20 and such analysis every five years to bring everybody up to
21 speed. What would happen if the legislature voting on your
22 programs saw the difference between the fifteen regions,

23 and had a better sense of where certain programs should be
24 targeted. The objective is not expensive, it's not that we
25 mind doing it for ourselves, but any time something's done

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1 for the whole State, there's a nullification factor. Even
2 if you don't have the money, think about ideas like that.
3 And I've given you some detail in my recommendations on
4 that.

5 Just as some realtors zoning commission that don't do
6 economic studies, if they see these studies they would have
7 a better idea what's realistic for a prospect. And we do
8 need that here. In terms of transportation, which is
9 fundamental of economic development, clearly our highest
10 priority is the expansion from the New York line to
11 Waterbury. We've completed our geometric needs study, the
12 next step is an impact statement, which has stalled for a
13 long -- there's a list of reasons, but be aware that's very
14 important to us. Everybody has their transportation
15 problems, we have ours, too.

16 Michael Galas (phonetic), who wrote all the reports
17 for the strategy award, he wrote a second paper in
18 eighty-four, and he pointed out from the NAPA trade cards
19 and the regional economy -- New England is something
20 altogether, there's an attachment about my remarks on
21 this -- and as time goes by, eighty-four becomes more
22 important to Connecticut as ninety-five gets more
23 congested, he's quoted as saying this. In the mornings,
24 our labor will be important to the area every day.
25 Westbound on I-84 over the Housatonic River, over from

1 Southbridge to Newtown, twenty-five percent of our labor is
2 on just that one bridge coming into the region.

3 So everybody has transportation problems. There's a
4 case made in the attachment that I-84 has some special
5 priority for the State. We're hoping that, in your
6 remarks, you'll say that this region feels so and so, if
7 you can't go so far as to say yeah, they really are ahead
8 of you. You can point out that we have some special needs
9 and it's important to the whole State. On another road
10 issue -- a controversial road, (unintelligible) the route
11 stop and expressway in Norwalk, we're not in favor of
12 contracting that road. I've got a variety of reasons in my
13 comments, a strong development factor, the fact that the
14 pent up affordable housing needs would be put first in the
15 affordable housing market.

16 And the second time -- at the same time, we would like
17 to address that need with rail -- expanding commuter rail.
18 Most State policy makers are aware that on the coast a lot
19 of labor goes southwestern from Orange, Stratford and over
20 to Bridgeport and down to Norwalk. We're with them, too;
21 our people come south in the morning down to that area, as
22 well. And that's climbing, because the housing situation
23 is so tough along the coast, especially in Danbury.

24 So we believe that real and extension to Milford has a
25 real hope of getting us somewhere and being important, and

1 realized to that that strategy helps some of Fairfield
2 County, which is another one of those golden geoses laying
3 eggs. You may not think it's true just riding in here, but
4 agriculture is also important to us. I'm not talking about
5 just open space, and, you know, museums, farms, but we do
6 have some active farmlands, and we hope that you'll have
7 agriculture in your plan as an economic issue. The
8 establishment of measurable goals in the State -- and I'm
9 hoping your opinion as a region as defined by the office of
10 policy and management, which is the fifteenth regional
11 planning agency. If you do that to us, it gives us
12 something to react to. These people ought to have their
13 act together on X, Y, Z, and that's not a bad thing.
14 That'll give us something to talk about in trying to work
15 with it.

16 And I also have attached our draft statement for our
17 regional plan on economic development. You can understand
18 our area better; it's not just greater Danbury suburbs,
19 it's greater Danbury, slash, New Milford and New Milford
20 and its suburbs. It's not just another suburb of Danbury.
21 We would like that to be understood. If you bring in the
22 Sears Tower and you market clients in Chicago, and this
23 little area in western Connecticut says gee, from the
24 southern part of our region we can see the Empire State
25 building, and in the northern end of our region you can

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1 watch every detail of our region, wow, that sounds good to
2 a lot of people who have choices where they're going to go
3 to work and how they're going to contact people.

4 So it's a good possible area from that perspective,
5 and I've also included some commuter field maps, which I
6 think opens some eyes as to what's going on in Westchester
7 as opposed to any other part of the State. So, again,
8 thank you, and thank you for the chance to make these
9 remarks.

10 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. I would like to
11 call University President James Smoder (phonetic).

12 MR. SMODER: Commissioner McDonald, welcome
13 to West Conn. We're delighted you're here on the day
14 where it's not snowing. I'm James Smoder, president of
15 Western Connecticut State University, and it's probably no
16 surprise they believe that the key to Connecticut's
17 future lies in the development of an educated workforce.
18 An economic future would depend on the creation of jobs,
19 careers and knowledge, as well as on the preparation of
20 knowledge workers to build these jobs, hence the State's
21 institutions of higher education.

22 Community colleges, independent colleges,
23 universities, UConn, the four-year university, are critical
24 to that future. Let me amplify, through some examples
25 here, how our public university can and are filling this

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1 role. First, at this university, we directly address the
2 State's workforce through our institutional mission to
3 provide education in professional areas and fine arts and a
4 strong foundation in liberal arts. This includes degree
5 programs of business, job administration, nursing, social
6 work, communication, management information systems,

7 science and education.

8 We also emphasize the fine arts in the school systems
9 and performing arts in the Connecticut State University
10 system. All these areas create jobs and careers. While
11 some may not appreciate the fact that the Connecticut
12 Commission of Culture and Tourism, in 2006, reported that
13 the arts, culture and tourism generally account for over
14 four million dollars in activity, and a hundred and seventy
15 thousand jobs annually. Thus, we believe that each one of
16 our graduates, whether it be in computer science or active
17 in accounting, in which Connecticut's project workforce
18 exists. And we believe that our liberal arts foundation
19 develops skill and purpose of mind that will enable every
20 he or she that graduates to adapt as there's unknown
21 challenges and opportunities within the City.

22 Second, WCSU is committed to providing high economic
23 quality and access of affordability of the State who
24 comprise eighty-nine point nine percent of the student
25 body. This attractive formula has produced -- has

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1 increased to thirteen percent full-time students since two
2 thousand four. We also play an important role in
3 educational access to members of Connecticut's immigrant
4 populations, who are largely students of color and recent
5 immigrants. We're a ninety percent first generation
6 college attendees and we're working progressively to mend
7 partnerships to enhance their academic success.

8 In addition to the preparation of future workforce,
9 WCSU is assisting with public universities to improve local

10 economic conditions today. We provided valuable assistance
11 to local businesses and organizations through the work of
12 the business resource center. This center organizes
13 factories, having student attendees to work on real world
14 problems in the work organization. These include large
15 established companies, such as Brands and Ultrasonics, as
16 well as smaller enterprises, such as Church Hill Plastics.

17 Not only does this program, which require that all
18 students (unintelligible), it also makes our graduates more
19 job ready, thus increasing their productivity to hires. In
20 2005 WCSU students provided fifty thousand hours of free
21 labor to local organizations and internships. Universities
22 like ours also contribute to the economic development to
23 the State and the contributions we make to the quality of
24 life. The economic development strategy in Florida has
25 already enhanced the quality of life and culture resources

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1 are important in tracking and retaining the knowledge
2 workers and creating a practice.

3 We offer such exposures to the greater Danbury
4 community; the Danbury theater, music and arts program that
5 our school of regional arts program presents. These
6 include not only our own talented student faculty, but also
7 world renowned artists such as Chip Ferrera (phonetic) and
8 James Earl Jones and the Manhattan String Quartet. In
9 addition, last year WCSU joined in partnership with the
10 City of Danbury for the public authority that was
11 (unintelligible) and the Center for the Arts. Finally,
12 Western Connecticut urges, again, like our sister

13 institution, provides a great economic advantage to the
14 region. A recent study demonstrated that WCSU in 2005
15 contributed an output of goods and services to the region
16 totaling two hundred and thirteen point six million
17 dollars. Compared to our State (unintelligible) for that
18 year it represents a return of three dollars and
19 seventy-five cents for every State dollar invested, an
20 excellent rate of return.

21 We've developed many plans to ensure Connecticut
22 reaches its economic plan, but our public institutions must
23 be front and center. We in the Connecticut State
24 University system are eager to continue and expand our
25 role. We're also grateful for the investment that the

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1 legislature and executive branch has made in higher
2 education. This set Connecticut apart from any of our
3 competitors. The continuation of support will be critical
4 to our collective future. I thank you.

5 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. Mark Noland.

6 MR. NOLAND: Evening Commissioner, Stan.
7 Welcome to the greater Danbury area, and we hope that you
8 don't feel left out. We tried to fill up the audience for
9 you, so we have a good showing. Again, thanks for taking
10 the time in hearing our comments regarding -- from the
11 Housatonic value.

12 I'm a lifelong resident of Danbury dating back to the
13 1800s. My family and I have been involved in economic
14 community development in the greater Danbury and other
15 communities of the State. Our investment in the State of

16 Connecticut remain strong, and we offer our input to the
17 Connecticut Economic Strategic plan. My comments will
18 cover housing, workforce development, education and
19 transportation, and community infrastructure all in three
20 minutes.

21 And regarding housing, as I pointed out in the
22 November 15th O'Hand (phonetic) report, the act concerning
23 physical accountability for the State, there's a number of
24 important factors to consider. The region shows our
25 younger population is migrating out of the State and our

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1 senior population is growing in State. And we need to
2 continue our efforts to retract and retain our stable
3 families and seniors to stay in Connecticut. Housing is a
4 foundation for our State's economy. It can be compared to
5 the infrastructure of the community. Our residents support
6 our schools, government and our labor force for the diverse
7 employment sector of the State of Connecticut and its
8 neighboring states have to offer. Connecticut should pay
9 close attention to the cost of housing for all income
10 levels and sectors, and implement strategies to address the
11 creation of income based housing, working with employers in
12 the communities.

13 I also think that we should address the ten percent
14 requirement that the communities need to have as a
15 threshold for affordable housing. I suggest that we modify
16 the ten percent number to a more fallible percent digit for
17 the smaller communities that are faced with this
18 requirement. Regarding workforce development and

19 education, President Demire (phonetic) adequately
20 articulated how great our Connecticut system is and I think
21 we need to continue to work on that education system. We
22 have a great workforce to draw from.

23 Our location allows our families the ability to draw
24 from the New York, Rhode Island and Massachusetts
25 metropolitan region. We need to be sure that we have

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1 adequate resources to address the needs of our employers.
2 Our education system, both local and state level, needs to
3 be part of the economic plan to be sure that we're all
4 working together to build a strong educated workforce.
5 Educational cost needs to remain competitive.

6 Regarding transportation and community infrastructure,
7 with the cost of development increasing in alarming rates,
8 Connecticut must continue to be proactive in cost effective
9 development. Investing in public transportation and
10 addressing communities to build where existing
11 infrastructure is in place, will assist in being cost
12 effective. And sharing regional resources is an important
13 part of -- component as John Shu said. And thank you,
14 again, for your time.

15 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. I'd like to call
16 Rudy Marcon from the Town of Brookfield.

17 MR. MARCON: Rudy Marcon, M-A-R-C-O-N. I'm
18 left-handed, I didn't come here with a prepared statement.
19 I came here in support of John Shu, our executive director
20 of Hefco. Part of our major concerns at Hefco relative
21 to -- very relative to economic development is traffic and

22 our interstate network, not only 95, but, obviously, 84,
23 and the apparent delays that take place with the
24 improvements that are scheduled for these two very
25 important areas in southwestern Connecticut.

20

1 If we're going to be able to move the workforce that
2 we need to, to provide the human resource available for the
3 jobs that we do create, with your good leadership, I think
4 it's critical that we begin to look at transportation; not
5 just the roads, but important also are the rail lines and
6 especially the branch line. We've been working on that for
7 the last five years when Congressman Mallony (phonetic)
8 worked with a grant from the federal government of two
9 million dollars to work on that, and it has been
10 painstakingly slow to move this project forward just to get
11 the (unintelligible).

12 We had a meeting in Hartford two months ago, both
13 Surpa and Hefco together, to try and get the DOP to move
14 forward on this project. This is critical to developing a
15 long and fruitful corridor and bringing that workforce down
16 to the New Milford area, but we hope to expand the rail
17 service down to that area. So I would urge the DECD to
18 support whatever they can in our efforts to provide better
19 transportation in our area, that helps move workers from
20 the northern part of the State down to help fill that need.
21 Thank you.

22 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. Andrea
23 Gardner.

24 MS. GARDNER: Hi. Good evening. Thank
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25 you. I'm here to talk about the necessity of the

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1 endeavoring arts and culture in our community as part of a
2 broad initiative plan. I have personal experience with
3 the impact that arts can have on the community, in my
4 capacity as board president of the playhouse and my
5 involvement in that project since 1998 to 2005, with the
6 renovation process, the opening and the revamping of that.

7 And I have been able to see first-hand the economic
8 impact that an arts organization -- an acceptable arts
9 organization in a community can have in a community where
10 most people wouldn't really think would need economic
11 development. In my capacity, before you now, I am the
12 manager of the downtown special person's district, also
13 known as City Center. And as the urban center for the
14 Housatonic valley, I think it's very important to continue
15 to create downtown Danbury as a culture and destination by
16 providing signature events would be -- that could showcase
17 the region, specifically the games and also Connecticut
18 Home first value.

19 And I think that can be done by building up the
20 infrastructure that we already have; not just the
21 Housatonic valley, but all of Connecticut has wonderful
22 examples of main streets that can be developed and service
23 destination points, and to continue to support public and
24 private partnership in maintaining and preserving those
25 historic main streets that we have, and working with

1 private developers providing incentives, and also in
2 partnerships with other organizations, such as Connecticut.

3 And I think, too, as we continue to try to create
4 downtown Danbury as a destination place, hopefully as a
5 part of the largest strategic plan, if you do not see any
6 bullet points, the ingenerating arts and culture as a
7 point, such as a strategic plan. I think the State
8 recognizes that on a level when they reorganize the
9 Commission of the Arts, which is now the Commission of
10 Culture. And as we continue to try to get our people to
11 this region through culture in the arts, just please give
12 them a way to get here. Improve that transportation
13 infrastructure. Thank you.

14 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. Elizabeth
15 Stocker.

16 MS. STOCKER: Good evening. I'm Elizabeth
17 Stocker, I'm the planner and community developer for the
18 Town of Newtown. And I do not have -- actually prepared a
19 statement, but I made some notes since I was sitting here.
20 But I do want to thank you, very much. I want to thank
21 our legislatures for putting forth this public act that
22 enacted our requirement for the strategic plan. I think
23 it's a very important step for Connecticut's future, and I
24 commend the DECD for holding these meetings for the
25 beginning of the outreach.

1 And I had an opportunity also to review the request

2 for proposal for the consultants that will be working with
3 you, and I'm hopeful that, perhaps, to be involved was some
4 of the focus groups that are going to be prepared. And I
5 look forward to further participating in that plan, there
6 the whole plan will continue to involve us as the State
7 residents and people who want to make Connecticut one of
8 the best places to live, work and to visit. I support the
9 prior speakers comments; I think that they were very
10 important to our moving ahead as a State.

11 And when you asked about articulating about what we
12 want to do or want to be, and, as I said, I think that what
13 we want to be is the best place in the United States to be.
14 And I hope that this plan will help us get there. A couple
15 of ideas that I've had on how we can do that; I believe our
16 tax structure in our State needs to be reviewed to stop the
17 competition between our communities, so that we can work
18 together as a State to enhance the economic stand of our
19 communities, or our people, and really make us a stronger
20 State. We're a small place and yet we have a hundred and
21 sixty-nine communities who are more or less competing with
22 each other. And I'm hoping -- and certainly within the
23 Housatonic region, been involved when we had a partnership
24 here for economic development, it was a very strong
25 partnership and we did have a working relationship, and had

24

1 been involved in this field for quite sometime in
2 Connecticut, and that is forgoing.

3 And that is something that has been I think very
4 fruitful for our State, to know what people are doing here,

5 what Fairfield County is doing, Hartford County out to
6 Windham and New London. So I think that's so important for
7 us to work together. Another item that may be worthwhile
8 checking into would be some changes to our land use laws,
9 that would have -- or give our community the ability to
10 limit or manage growth better. And, again, I think that
11 might go back to my first comment that talks about
12 competition, but what we really want to do is preserve our
13 communities and our important amenities that we have in the
14 communities, improve our commercial district, maintain our
15 open space, our agricultural land.

16 Newtown is very important to our community, so we want
17 to improve those things. Again, transportation, options
18 that would help make our air quality better, to move people
19 from place to place, including mass transit, work with the
20 communities directly to include that in our economic
21 development goal, both at a local level as well as a State
22 level and regional. And our educational programs have to
23 match the type of jobs that graduates will find here in our
24 State, keep them here and allow them to contribute to
25 Connecticut's future. And alternatively make sure that our

25

1 labor force has the skill that the employers of the future
2 needs.

3 We also find -- would like to just say that there is
4 ongoing efforts in our community to improve our economic
5 standing. We'd like to help you help us, so we're very
6 happy to be involved. Thank you.

7 MS. MCDONALD: I just want to pick up on a

8 point that you've made and prior speakers made. We were
9 in Willimantic and one of the speakers stressed very
10 highly the creative arts and how important it is to not
11 only economic development, but also to the quality of
12 life. So it has been duly noted, and even though it's not
13 in the public act, it has been added to our list of items
14 that we're going to be looking at.

15 And, second, the point that was just raised about the
16 focus groups; this is the start of the process, this is the
17 start of the public involvement in the process. It is our
18 plan to -- we kicked off these ten forums to get all the
19 input from you, and as we're doing that we're shaping them
20 into specific initiatives, which we will come back to you
21 and we will have focus groups, we will
22 have (unintelligible), we will go back and forth so that
23 when we release the plan, we might not have unanimous
24 support for all of the initiatives, but we will at least
25 have had a thorough dialogue back and forth so that we come

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1 up with the best possible solution.

2 So I just wanted to reinforce that this is the start
3 of the public involvement process, and we will be back
4 again in all of the different -- so, we'll go onto the next
5 speaker.

6 MR. MCMILLEN: I just want to say that it
7 is required that this plan take account of all of the
8 components of all of the strategies that the RPAs
9 produced, as well as all of the other agencies produced.
10 So all of these things will be taken into account.

11 Christine Edwards.

12 MS. EDWARDS: Thank you, and thank everyone
13 for being here to add to this input. I'm actually from
14 Greenwich, Connecticut; I showed up at our economic
15 meeting at six-thirty, it was going to go on to seven,
16 unfortunately everyone had packed up. So I wanted to make
17 sure that I was able to come here to bring out some of the
18 information I felt was very important. I'm a member of
19 the representatives in town, meeting in Greenwich, so I'm
20 an elected official in that regard. I'm also a realtor so
21 I look at housing issues and such, and I've worked in
22 areas involving, particularly, elder housing and
23 affordable housing, among other things. I know that may
24 be an oxymoron coming from Greenwich, Connecticut, but
25 there you go.

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1 One of the factors that I also want to look at is that
2 I've just been to another economic summit that was held for
3 the Greenwich Chamber of Commerce, which was a group that
4 was looking at all the decisions for economic development,
5 and the kind of like churning relationship of different
6 parts of the State, and looking at old industrial growth,
7 new growth, housing, all of these things were mentioned.
8 What was interesting to find is that being in the
9 southwestern part of the State, a lot of our activities are
10 really regional. So when we look at housing, when we look
11 at jobs, it goes to the west; it involves Westchester
12 County, it also involves New York City. It's not that we
13 look from Greenwich to Waterbury or Torrington to West

14 Hartford or Groton, we're looking toward to the west.

15 And because of that, we have to really see Connecticut
16 as a region. Certain parts of Connecticut are looking
17 forth up to Springfield, perhaps, or East Boston. We're
18 not just Connecticut; we are a region that shares in this
19 whole metropolitan area. When I look at what's been going
20 on -- and everyone says we've got to get trucks off the
21 road -- I divert back to the fact that we had the Hudson
22 Bridge burn fifty years or so ago -- we want to get the
23 trucks off; we need to work with New York City to rebuild
24 that bridge, because a lot of that -- especially with the
25 cost of fuel and such, and with the economy with having

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1 these trucks on I-95, that was why we had 84 -- to have the
2 trucks move toward 84, but coming off that bridge.

3 We have to look ahead at things that are not just lets
4 build a super highway over the water, and let's go barging,
5 because we know -- we know what the Sound can be like; it's
6 a very unpredictable waterway. And though it may be great
7 for New York City to save a lot of time, it's not
8 necessarily the best way to put containers coming off boats
9 in New Jersey and shipping them up to New Haven or
10 Bridgeport to have barges along the waterway in that
11 recreational sense.

12 When we're looking at such issues of keeping our young
13 graduates in State, and we're looking at jobs for teachers,
14 we have to look at what the competitive salary is, not
15 just, for instance, in Greenwich from what we have and
16 what's on record with those matching towns, but what's

17 going on in Westchester, where a gentleman I know, who
18 teaches in Greenwich, his son just took a job in Bedford,
19 because he made ten thousand dollars more than teaching in
20 the Greenwich system.

21 So we're competing, not just in Connecticut; we're in
22 the periphery of also Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New
23 York. And that's something that I think we have to look at
24 when we're seeing Connecticut in the economic development
25 for us as a city. And I also wanted to reiterate, because

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1 that's what sets us apart, because I'm also involved with
2 something through the Stamford Center for the arts, which
3 took a fall of about one point two million to seven hundred
4 thousand. That's a tremendous fall in terms of what they
5 can provide for qualify of life issues for presenting the
6 performing arts to be involved in the school system to
7 encourage all this.

8 I know that my time is off. I thank you, very much,
9 and I just wanted to make sure I got up here, I could
10 probably speak for the next half hour, but that's just a
11 little tidbit. And I'm just going to end on housing.
12 We've got to look at what we present out for zoning,
13 because that will limit our ability often to have in-home
14 small apartments, which may be in effect for the boomers
15 having the aging parents move out and may have had in their
16 home a care giving situation in-home, which may be now
17 available for a teacher, for a municipal worker. And we
18 shouldn't be so strict under zoning we can't improve one of
19 the best sources we have. Thank you.

20 MR. MCMILLEN: Steve Palmer.

21 MR. PALMER: Good evening. My name is
22 Steve Palmer, I'm the town planner for the Town of Bethel.
23 I'd like to thank Commissioner McDonald for the
24 opportunity to speak this evening. As a town planner, I
25 can tell you Bethel shares the same rules as every other

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1 town in the State. We want health, prosperity, quality of
2 life for every citizen. Our town just adopted our new ten
3 year plan of conservation development plan last year.
4 This plan is different from any other plan the Town's
5 considered before. It's very forward thinking, which is a
6 testament to the commissions and the citizens' willingness
7 to listen to new ideas and bring in tools for change.

8 While the place has its own meaning, it's charming
9 that we've established such a great place to live and work.
10 The town understands that failure for your planning for
11 growth will only leave Bethel behind. Now, the task
12 (unintelligible) move forward with reality with willing
13 developers. Complexities of development, in this day and
14 age, becomes daunting for smaller towns like Bethel to
15 manage on their own. Bethel is a middle class town with
16 limited personal and financial needs. While Bethel has the
17 location, the infrastructure and the available land, we
18 need to attract this type of development that could help
19 make a difference for the State. We cannot necessarily
20 make it happen on our own.

21 However, Bethel, like most other towns, would benefit
22 immensely from partnering with the State from legislation,

23 to funding assistance, to professional guidance. The State
24 should seek out this opportunity to assist towns like
25 Bethel who share their goals, and are making considerable

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1 efforts towards implementing staying on the growth
2 principle. The State's on the right track with the home
3 Connecticut legislation. This legislation is a positive
4 alternative to the owners who bring home more than thirty
5 G. They encourage towns to pay more for affordable housing
6 through the use of (unintelligible). It gives back some
7 decision making power to local boards and commissions.

8 Another example is the initiative or TODs. This type
9 of development is promising; it has solutions to issues
10 facing the State, such as housing, transportation,
11 redevelopment or downtown revitalization. But more can be
12 done and more should be done in these and other issues.
13 More clarity in direction should be available from the
14 State to towns. More communication in municipalities is
15 really key. We have the same goals; we should be working
16 more closely together, sharing resources, coordinating our
17 efforts and building relationships to get things done.

18 Because Connecticut is a home rule state, future
19 growth is largely dependant on local planning. Therefore,
20 it's in the State's best interest to build relationships
21 needed to ensure that both growth strategy and preservation
22 strategies remain consistent with the State's goal. So
23 with that, I'd like to offer the following suggestions:
24 build partnership with towns who are willing participants
25 in the State's growing model, whether by supportive

1 legislation for innovative planning tools, or by helping to
2 fund the projects, such as trans oriented development in
3 towns with attractive infrastructure.

4 The process by which these partnerships can take shape
5 is documented using a working model for other
6 municipalities in the future. Be proactive in your
7 planning at the State level. Read and inform yourselves
8 about all those plans for conservation and development.
9 There's a wealth of knowledge out there. The best
10 opportunities are those who are accounted and planned for.
11 Be more accessible to towns. Create an outreach division
12 in each planning division, hold regular meetings, meet with
13 officials, make connections, build relationships. We're
14 your eyes and ears. Regular interaction builds trust, puts
15 in more accountability on the State and local level to
16 achieve goals.

17 Seek out those regions continually that can add value
18 in Connecticut's economic growth. Proactively market those
19 programs. What do you have to offer to other towns and
20 cities? Act like a business. If you see an opportunity,
21 be aggressive. Invest in communities that have done their
22 work and plan for the future in accordance with the State's
23 growth plan. Reward diligence in town planning. And,
24 finally, in dealing -- in developing these partnerships and
25 extending relationships with local communities, State local

1 governments needs to be more focused and more prepared in
2 challenges that it meets. Also, show the citizens in the
3 business community within the State the government's
4 unifying and committed in doing whatever it takes to reach
5 their goals and maintain Connecticut as a workplace -- to
6 live, work and do business. Thank you.

7 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. Heidi Green.

8 MS. GREEN: Good evening. For the record,
9 my name's Heidi Green and I'm here on behalf of One
10 Thousand Presidents. One Thousand Presidents in
11 Connecticut is a statewide organization plan within the
12 organization. We represent a broad, politically and
13 geographically, professional coalition of individuals and
14 institutions (unintelligible). We're encouraging
15 development in places where we have sewer and transit
16 infrastructure, and at the same time to produce
17 Greenfields for clean air, water, healthy habitat and a
18 viable economy.

19 Successful smart growth in Connecticut requires a
20 vision for where we want to be and investment, policies and
21 programs to reinforce that vision. Our vision is for
22 robust cities with compact walkable transit in accessible
23 communities, active agricultural land in a healthy, natural
24 environment. The comprehensive economic development
25 strategy is one inch away from accomplishing that vision,

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1 and we commend this plan for undertaking this task with
2 openness. To grow smart we need to grow where we have the
3 infrastructure in place.

4 In Connecticut we have more infrastructural challenges
5 that impede the growth for our cities. They include silo
6 settlements, priorities that have not been clearly
7 articulated, and State local tax are hurting badly and in
8 need of economy dedication. In creating a State
9 comprehensive development strategy, One Thousand Presidents
10 of Connecticut encourages you to adopt the following three
11 principles: First, the State will make no economic
12 development investment for facilities, no economic
13 development programs that fuel urban disinvestments.
14 First, do no wrong. Do no harm.

15 Second, that the State will categorize market forces
16 in areas where growth is stable in the long run, but where
17 the market receives its short-term risk to outweigh the
18 short-term benefit. And, third, that the State will
19 encourage equitable distribution as a reward for effort.
20 This will include a regional tax revenue share, traffic
21 (unintelligible) and the impact on human environment. We
22 encourage you to adopt and abide by the definition of
23 principles that are currently in the draft of the
24 responsible growth task force report. And we urge you to
25 strenuously commit to growth that will support and sustain

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1 the current population.

2 I'm more than happy to meet with you and your
3 consultants to discuss policies and procedures in greater
4 detail. And thank you, once again, for the opportunity to
5 be here.

6 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. Ken Danster
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7 (phonetic).

8 MR. DANSTER: Good evening. My name is Ken
9 Danster; I'm a member of the Newtown economic development
10 commission, and I'm also a builder and a land developer.
11 Our State has so many agencies that appear to work
12 independently. As a result, do not consider their
13 economic effects on their actions. For any economic plan
14 to be effective and realized, DECD should work on
15 requiring other agencies to make economic impact part of
16 their mission or strategic plan.

17 Housing is one of the areas that we always look at.
18 We are lacking in diversified housing inventory and market
19 owner residents, too. We lack housing for workers that are
20 overweighed for housing for the elderly. Your agency needs
21 to get involved with the land use commission to develop --
22 preserving agriculture, but provide more rational housing
23 choices. Land use agencies should need to consider
24 economic -- the economic impact of their decisions, along
25 with their traditional roams.

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1 Also for improving -- for our State, the agencies like
2 DOT, they need to be held to a much higher standard than
3 they have in the past when they designed and poorly
4 executed projects, such as the I-84 widening through
5 Cheshire, the replacement of the Sikorsky Bridge and the
6 replacement of the interchange of route 25 and I-95, which
7 reflects poorly on our entire State. The I-84 widening
8 proposal through Danbury should not be allowed to impede on
9 a twenty year basis. That is just not attractive to any

Danbury.txt

10 company that wants to come in here, to think that I-84 is
11 going to be under construction for the next twenty years.

12 And the train line -- the Norwalk, Danbury train line,
13 which should be extended up to New Milford, when that land
14 goes through it really should be considered as a state of
15 the art transportation system, not just something that's
16 cobbled together just to make the system work. We do
17 everything in a well done manner, and, you know, to the
18 highest standard. That's what's going to attract people to
19 come to our State. Thank you.

20 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. Julie Ann
21 Becker.

22 MS. BECKER: Hello. My name is Julie Ann
23 Becker Abbot, and I'm a representative of the Connecticut
24 Association of Realtors Legislative Committee. You've
25 heard the testimony from the Connecticut Association of

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1 Realtors past president; we've given you at previous
2 meetings, our statement of policy, we'll give you another
3 copy of that today.

4 And I'm here for regional standards of residential
5 construction in Connecticut. The Connecticut Association
6 of Home Builders -- well, actually, the National
7 Association of Home Builders has developed a cost effective
8 green building standards for residential homes. These
9 standards are being formally launched on February 14th, and
10 can be found at any AB. My point is that the standard
11 already exists, and I think that it is intelligent to use
12 what exists. They're cost effective and we don't need to

13 reinvent the wheel.

14 Right now the standards are being used in Richfield
15 County. The Richfield County Board of Builders and the
16 Connecticut Association of Home Builders has launched a
17 green building project on a residential home on Taginal
18 Drive. The system is working great. The Connecticut Home
19 Builder's Association is working to provide a home that is
20 cost effective, that showcases, environmentally, standards
21 that a home builder will have instructions to use their
22 home, and also, in addition, we will also -- they will be
23 taught with a manual; people will be able to go to their
24 manual and see how to use their homes. And that's all I
25 have. Thank you.

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1 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. Vincent Mulvey
2 (phonetic).

3 MR. MULVEY: Good evening, Commissioner.
4 Nice to see you again. I promised you a trifecta and here
5 I am. For our friends that don't get the inside joke,
6 this is my third appearance before you.

7 And to illustrate that we exist in some independent
8 silos -- even in one place -- in that Milford is
9 represented in our judicial branch by the Litchfield County
10 court system, and various other entities, and our workforce
11 development strategy based out of our Waterbury base, and
12 certainly our planning agency representing the greater
13 Danbury region, we, and thankfully Mr. Shu, pointed out to
14 you and to all of ourselves in New Milford.

15 I won't reiterate the comments that I've made earlier,
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16 other than to say that I thought of one additional silo
17 that doesn't seem to be connected. I don't feel there's an
18 apparent connection between a local economic developer and
19 commission that I work with, with the Department of
20 Commerce DEA. I don't feel the regional development agency
21 has a real connectivity back to us, or at least to me on
22 the ground in the local community. I don't feel that
23 connectivity. So that may be something that would break
24 down those barriers, as well.

25 You asked for big thought, out of the box. And having

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1 had two opportunities to hear that encouragement, here's my
2 big thought: Think small. One of the things that we need
3 to do better in encouraging business growth in our
4 communities is to focus more energy on our small business
5 growth. Those are the entities that create the bulk of our
6 jobs, that grow new jobs and preserve jobs. We often focus
7 on our big ticket large employers; I'm thankful in our
8 community that, particularly, Clark has been one of the
9 most encouraged and benefited companies in terms of their
10 independent power and energy process. And that's good that
11 we do those things.

12 We've also encouraged medical and steel technologies,
13 a small developing company that we hope to be a large
14 flowing company. But what we really -- what I hear, as the
15 person on the ground who helps connect those dots and bring
16 resources to those large companies, is that I'm also the
17 person that hears from the small entrepreneur companies
18 what about me? And so I will encourage you, as we develop

19 a small plan for our State, to consider improving micro
20 programs and making them more transparent and accessible,
21 and to not look at the small company who may be a million
22 dollars in sales and has a good revenue stream, but can't
23 produce the kind of financial information that you can task
24 to Clark, or, you know, companies that may have the ability
25 to generate private sector funds.

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1 And we task them for financial background for
2 projections that are easy to show that the small operation
3 that needs a little room to grow more. We make it almost
4 more difficult than they can stand. And the one final
5 piece on that, I will reference that here at Western
6 Connecticut State University amongst the university system,
7 the disbursement of the small business development center
8 closer to the marketplace is a good thing. I think we need
9 to look at funding them at, perhaps, even a higher level so
10 that they're not just a magnet source, but have some
11 outreach capacities so that neighbors like them can develop
12 those services, as well. Thank you.

13 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. Jim Ballano.

14 MR. BALLANO: My name is Jim Ballano. I'm
15 the development manager for Scope Realty Associates, and
16 I'm formerly the economic director for the City of
17 Danbury. I come here in my private capacity as a
18 developer. I have a couple of issues to talk about, but
19 one of the more important ones is the one up front, which
20 is that our company is the owner of a tract of land
21 adjacent to the university, a seventeen acre lot which is

22 slated for development for a campus research fund.

23 And we think that's a very exciting project and the
24 hope is that this will help with the health care community
25 at Danbury Hospital, with the higher education community

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1 here at West Conn and with the private sector of what
2 Governor Rell called, I guess, her twenty first century
3 economic engine, which is the bioscience, pharmaceutical
4 and semiconductors, which have a strong presence here in
5 Danbury. So we're very excited about that, and we hope
6 that the State continues to -- because I know you've done
7 this in the past -- continue to encourage this work in
8 promoting these types of things, whether it be through
9 incentives, or partnering with incubators, or any other
10 programs like that, not only for our project, but for the
11 region and for the State of Connecticut. It would be the
12 first one of its kind here in Connecticut.

13 On a second issue, I think it's important that those
14 twenty first century industries that workforce development
15 and the retraining of displaced workers -- Danbury used to
16 be a big manufacturing area and a lot of the
17 manufacturing jobs have went away. So it's even more
18 critical to have a workforce development side that
19 commitment is kept up. We have some exciting projects that
20 we look forward to partnering with you on. One other thing
21 I would like to say, we need to try to create jobs. I know
22 John Shu is the expert on this, but on transportation it's
23 really important in this area, and the people who are
24 commuting from this area, or up into it, as the economy

25 grows. And if you're looking to get cars off the road with

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1 the rail, we would definitely need to get a branch line
2 built up.

3 I wasn't intending to talk about it, but on the way
4 over I jumped on the Metro North web site and just for some
5 comparison it's about a thirty-two mile trip from White
6 Plains to Grand Central Station, and that takes thirty-six
7 minutes to Harlem. I think Danbury to Stamford is about
8 the same distance. Danbury to New Haven, if you drove, is
9 about thirty-six miles, but it's about a two hour train
10 ride. Danbury to Hartford, you can't really get there from
11 here so forget it. So I'm really here for our development,
12 which is (unintelligible) really exciting, so we look
13 forward to contacting you and working with you on that.
14 Thank you.

15 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. Caroline Siskark
16 (phonetic).

17 MS. SISKARK: Good evening. Welcome to
18 Danbury. I do not have prepared remarks tonight, but I
19 would be remiss -- as the director of the Housing
20 Authority here that serves three thousand persons in each
21 region -- not to, at least, make a commercial for several
22 thousand agencies and services, and I know that your
23 agencies are working on what we want to highlight. One is
24 that the Housing Authority that service folks who are in a
25 circumstance where their income is going more towards

1 housing than it is for the rest of their lives, we'd like
2 to ask you to support these affairs in order to support
3 viable living.

4 We know that it is in play, we know that there's some
5 issues about it being fully funded, and whether or not it's
6 targeting funding within the next couple of years. We
7 think it's a good first step, we invite you to do much
8 more. Secondly, I'd like to ask that PILOT grants are
9 fully restored. The impact with this community is about a
10 hundred and three thousand dollars. Those are fees that
11 the City of Danbury waive essentially for the Housing
12 Authority in lieu of grants from the State, and like
13 eighteen other housing authorities in the State -- and cut
14 out the elimination of the PILOT in this budget compared to
15 those of other states.

16 Our concern is raising rent on folks who can't afford
17 it. And, lastly, eighty, dash, six four G and the ten
18 percent of affordability, eight thirty G, we really would
19 like to look at expanding the flexibility under that
20 particular statute to other regions. It should be ten
21 percent across the region. It allows for a lot of creative
22 thinking in terms of what can we do for a more affordable
23 housing, more workforce houses, available on a regional
24 basis and not a very strict artificial sterile ten percent
25 town by town. I encourage you to look at that and thank

1 you, very much for your time.

2 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. Michael
3 McGloughlin (phonetic).
4 MR. MCGLOUGHLIN: Commissioner, thank you
5 for coming to Danbury, we're glad you're here and
6 appreciate this opportunity. My name is Michael
7 McGloughlin. I'm chief of staff to Mayor Mark Boughton of
8 Danbury. The Mayor was unable to attend tonight, so I
9 offer some comments regarding economic development
10 priorities in the City of Danbury.

11 Danbury's economy is strong with low unemployment,
12 stable municipal taxes and good prospects for continued job
13 growth. Our community is home to some spectacular growth
14 industries, such as pharmaceuticals, financial services and
15 alternative energy. Companies like Anaheim (phonetic)
16 Pharmaceuticals, fuel cell energy and electro energy have
17 produced hundreds of new high paying jobs to our market,
18 and have plans for further growth in the coming years.
19 Danbury Hospital is thriving as our largest employer and
20 continues to earn national recognition for high quality
21 health care.

22 It sounds like we have no economic development
23 concerns here, but I must say we're facing tremendous
24 challenges I must bring to your attention. transportation
25 is increasingly becoming a tremendous burden to the Danbury

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1 region. Interstate 84 is recognized by the transportation
2 strategy board as a high priority for improvements, but
3 somehow we remain decades away from meaningful improvements
4 for this important road. Rail service in our area is

5 generations behind other parts of the city for capacity,
6 efficiency and competitiveness.

7 Many residents commuting to New York are finding
8 better transportation options just to cross the boarder in
9 New York and further clog the I-84, 684 corridor to reach
10 their train. Our corporate partners here may look
11 elsewhere for their future expansion if we don't move
12 faster in providing transportation improvements in the
13 greater Danbury area. Our strong economy seems to be a
14 detriment to the scoring models used for economic
15 development resources.

16 Danbury transitioned well from a single industry as a
17 manufacturing town to a diverse industry city over the past
18 fifty years, thanks to the vision of past manufacturers who
19 saw a need of expanding our economy and employment base.
20 The City of Danbury has been proactive in offering tax
21 incentives to our corporate partners to expand. We seem to
22 be doing the right things for continued success, but we
23 can't do it alone. The success and economic bulk of our
24 region needs the attention of Hartford.

25 Affordable housing is a challenge for our workers.

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1 Transportation needs far more resources here, and we need
2 to overcome the perception of elected officials and State's
3 policy makers in Hartford that Danbury is doing fine
4 without your help. Indeed, a shining star in western
5 Connecticut, Danbury deserves your attention to ensure this
6 job machine here keeps running along. Thank you.

7 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. Jane Darmien

8 (phonetic).

9 MR. DARMIEN: My name is Jane Darmien. I'm
10 a landscape architect and a small business, I own my own
11 business in Danbury, Connecticut. I also think I'm the
12 only representative in this area this evening. So I'm
13 going to speak to both. First of all, I'm going to echo
14 some of the comments that were made, but I think one of
15 the things my business -- especially being based in
16 Danbury, is the relationship to New York State is
17 extremely important to our region. You can't emphasize
18 that enough that the Hudson valley, which is considered
19 now the Silicon Valley of the east, New York City and
20 Lower Westchester and now even Putnam, Dutchess and
21 Columbia County are now impacting the kind of work that I
22 do.

23 And I'm finding -- I've been practicing for thirty
24 years in the Danbury area -- that a lot of work is now
25 going into those areas as far as housing, as far as

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1 commercial development, corporate development, etcetera.
2 So I think that's something that you need to be looking at
3 more extensively. Transportation, I can't even say it
4 enough, so I'll say it again. It's probably the biggest
5 problem up to the Danbury area as far as its economic
6 growth. 84 used to be a road that you could go on and not
7 have a long commute; it's now a thing of the past.

8 And one of my big issues, as a small business owner,
9 is not only the transportation of my employees -- I do have
10 five employees and four of them live in the City of

11 Danbury, so I feel very proud of that, and I commend Noland
12 for saying that small businesses are the backbone and women
13 owned businesses are the biggest growing small businesses
14 in the nation. And I think we should be listening not only
15 to our small businesses, but our women owned businesses.

16 Housing is a huge issue for my employees. To get
17 affordable housing on an entry level apartment, where the
18 entry level salary is about forty thousand dollars, is
19 virtually impossible for me to compete with the larger
20 companies that can pay fifty, sixty thousand dollars. And
21 insurance is a huge issue for my company, specifically
22 medical insurance. It's very difficult for me to compete
23 against larger companies that provide a much more
24 comprehensive plan. That's my business world; my
25 professional world as a Connecticut architect strongly

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1 believes in smart growth, sustaining sites, green building
2 and specifically -- and I haven't heard it said enough
3 here -- watershed protection. And that is a big problem in
4 the State of Connecticut, because of its municipal
5 structure.

6 Watersheds do not have a political line whatsoever.
7 In other words, watersheds start in Massachusetts and comes
8 right through Connecticut to the Long Island Sound and yet
9 the regulations are very much town based. We have huge
10 issues with the Housatonic River with the Connecticut
11 River, and specifically in New Fairfield with Candlewood
12 Lake. I think you also heard about CIRC and all of the
13 regulations that are going on there. I think it's very

14 important that we understand that the economics feasibility
15 of a small town like New Fairfield is dependant on its
16 water resources.

17 I happen to be a board member of the (unintelligible)
18 commerce, which is a smaller water resource in the Town of
19 New Fairfield. But I can say a huge success story because
20 about ten years ago we gave into transportation from roads
21 that were not checked, from septic systems that were leaking into
22 that water resource, and, frankly, we came up with a lake
23 matching plan using private money and funding from a
24 reserve foundation, to create an opportunity to transform
25 that con, which occurred. When that transformation

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1 occurred, everybody's property value went up and million
2 dollar homes were built on that con, which I think anyone
3 who had been a gold con ten years ago would not have
4 believed.

5 So I think the understanding that for a county like
6 New Fairfield, Candlewood Lake and Gold Pond are important
7 aspects, and I'm sure every town in the region would say
8 that have a water resource that needs to be protected. As
9 a landscape architect, I'm also involved in doing master
10 planning. Right now I'm master planning Rogers Park, which
11 is an eighty-eight acre park and municipal golf course. I
12 also did the master plan for Pow Wow, which is a six
13 hundred acre municipal park, and was one of the people that
14 created the idea of the Ice Track.

15 When you see these kinds of green ways, transitions
16 transform an area, it's really an economic boom, because

17 one of the issues that most corporations look at, besides
18 the infrastructure and housing are quality of life issues.
19 I think quality of life is green ways, open space,
20 protecting our agriculture, protecting our resources has to
21 be considered. And I think -- I commend Ms. Green for her
22 comments on smart growth and putting together a plan that
23 really emphasizes transportation, communities and strong
24 municipal course.

25 The last thing that I would like to discuss, though,

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1 is education. Connecticut has a history; it's not a new
2 state, it's one of the original states. And what I see is
3 development that negates beautiful old structures, stone
4 walls, lovely old trees. I think those are elements that
5 make Connecticut great and should not be ignored in any
6 kind of economic plan. And I thank you for your comments.

7 One last thing, I would like to add a few
8 organizations that you might not have thought of that you
9 could partner with, maybe you have, but I'm a member of the
10 Connecticut American Society of Landscape Architects, The
11 Connecticut Chapter of American Institute of Architects,
12 The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning
13 Association, The Housatonic River Valley Association, which
14 protects the Housatonic River -- and I might not have that
15 name correct, but John Shu could probably help me out on
16 that one -- and also the Norwalk River Watershed
17 Association.

18 But I happen to live in the Croton River and the
19 Hudson River watershed. I live just -- you can almost see

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20 into New York from my house. I think it's also important
21 to understand that what happens in Connecticut is certainly
22 a national treasure and we should also be considering that
23 whatever we do affects that watershed. I thank you for
24 your time.

25 MR. MCMI LLEN: Thank you. Tom Esposito.

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1 MR. ESPOSITO: Good evening and thank you
2 for coming. I'm Tom Esposito from the economic
3 development commission and the film commission in the Town
4 of New Milford. I want to echo what's been said by a
5 variety of people here. Transportation, transportation,
6 transportation. New Milford is ripe for commuter rail.
7 We've already proved that we could have six full cars of
8 passengers every single morning and every single evening.

9 I would like to echo the support for that and move
10 this to top priority. We are going to be the benefactors
11 for the wonderful extended Route 7, which took a very long
12 time to complete, but that road is going to get filled
13 pretty quickly if we do not have some other alternatives.
14 I would also like to see if we could resurrect the rail
15 line from Danbury from Brewster to give many of our
16 Connecticut residents two choices; either to go to south
17 Norwalk, work along the coast, or to get a connector to
18 Brewster to get right into Manhattan and some people into
19 Wall Street.

20 That is the economic engine that will grow our region.
21 If we can get people that can get on the train and start
22 working immediately, like many people in Westchester,

23 Putnam and Dutchess County do, we're going to attract that
24 type of resident to the Danbury and New Milford area. More
25 importantly, we should be a wonderful transportation hub

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1 for the Litchfield folks. So please put this on your high
2 priority. Thank you.

3 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. Candis Benyon
4 (phonetic).

5 MS. BENYON: Commissioner McDonald,
6 everyone, I'm Dr. Candis Benyon and I am the president of
7 Fairfield County Farm in Fairfield, and I'm also a
8 clinical psychiatrist in patient care. I've been a farmer
9 since I was age seven, and have lived in Connecticut all
10 those years, and I am sixty-two now, so I have seen the
11 State change a great deal. I grew up in Weston, I had
12 five working dairy farms and two horse farms. Right now
13 it doesn't have any farms at all.

14 The State of Connecticut has made an initiative of
15 smart growth, which means open space and working lands.
16 And working lands and farming are a part of our
17 agriculture. Farming produces local quality food and a
18 smaller carbon footprint, because they're less dependant on
19 trucking and having food imported to the State. It makes
20 it less dependant upon food. It also provides local jobs,
21 local income, local quality recreational opportunities, and
22 a model for a healthy, quality environment and lifestyle
23 and social values conducive to a healthy, happy and
24 sustainable community in the State where houses for the
25 last ten or fifteen years have been purchased as

1 investments instead of as homes. And that has had a
2 serious impact on the quality of life in our community,
3 because a person that buy their homes as an investment does
4 not have an investment in the development of their
5 community values and their community life.

6 They don't participate in the volunteer fire
7 department, for instance, and in other things that are
8 really important and a part of the sustainable community
9 are more than simply a commuter bedroom. Statistics of
10 farming; we've been losing farms in Connecticut
11 consistently for quite a few years now as a result of the
12 pressure and development, and the rising price of land.
13 The good news is that rich market farming is on the rocks.
14 Particularly rich market farms are actually run by women.
15 And by rich market farms, I mean beekeeping, herbs, organic
16 farming, organic mulch, specialty plants, Christmas trees,
17 shellfish, pumpkins, berries and horse keeping.

18 And by the way, the horse industry in Connecticut is a
19 multi, multi billion dollar business, and needs to be
20 supported. It brings a huge amount of business in
21 Connecticut. And in horse keeping and horse
22 (unintelligible) in the State of New York, just over the
23 boundary, but we're not doing much in Connecticut. Farming
24 needs to be supported in a variety of ways, but,
25 particularly, it needs to be supported, I think, by more

1 education to local town officials, particularly in this
2 area -- in Fairfield County.

3 When I -- we had a farm in Redding for thirty-five
4 years, and when we began that farm, which was on a land
5 that had been continuously farmed for two hundred previous
6 years, we put up agricultural buildings without any
7 problem, but now building inspectors have no concept; they
8 don't know what a home is. The assessors that come out
9 have no concept of what a pull building is. They have no
10 concept that there are different building codes that should
11 apply in agriculture buildings, as opposed to your house.
12 So, for instance, they require farmers on a stair step up
13 to a loft in a barn, you know, to put a railing with
14 pillars every four inches as if they were building a house.
15 And that increases the cost of an agriculture building
16 substantially. This is not meant for, you know, housing
17 folks; it's a whole different ball game.

18 And I was at a wonderful meeting for organic farmers,
19 in which one of the persons that came came from our -- came
20 from the building department of the State of Connecticut;
21 he actually had no concept of what the agricultural
22 building codes were in Connecticut. They're sort of like
23 sprinkled around somewhere, but, generally, unknown.
24 Another thing that needs to happen is Connecticut has had
25 an initiative now to purchase -- it's called Farmland

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1 Preservation Will, which I'm sure you're aware of. And the
2 idea is to purchase farmland and purchase the development
3 rights, and keep it so that that farmland cannot be

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4 developed in (unintelligible).

5 The difficulty is that farming is kind of a subsidies
6 location in Connecticut. And when a farmer deems his
7 development rights, and is then harassed by his neighbors,
8 because he's farming and they now -- they moved in from New
9 York or wherever it is -- and they don't like the smells,
10 and they don't like the sounds, so they have the zoning
11 officials crawling all over the farm, now the farmer can't
12 sell that land in order to raise enough money to pay legal
13 fees in order to defend himself, and, finally, the farm
14 goes out of business. So you have folks that harass
15 farmers that have been farming for a long time doing their
16 thing, because they would like to increase their property
17 values by creating a nice green park and removing the
18 farms. And that's a big problem.

19 And so the farmland preservation act, while valuable,
20 has a few wrinkles. So we need to educate our zoning
21 points, and we need to take a look at farmland preservation
22 and do some things that are going to keep farmers living in
23 Connecticut, because, otherwise, we're not going to have
24 them. Thank you.

25 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. John Goodman.

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1 MR. GOODMAN: Believe me, this was not
2 planned. I am farmer. I have an organic farm on Route
3 53, and I'm also a member of the Bethel Economic
4 Development Coalition. The reason that I came tonight is
5 because paragraph five in Governor Rell's press release
6 left out agriculture, left out farmland. Now, we can do

7 what we want to make our business better, but if we can't
8 feed our people we have a problem.

9 The small farm is an (unintelligible) business. I
10 just finished my sales taxes and sent it in today for the
11 farm, and as a result of that -- I took a look before
12 coming tonight -- and this year, at my farm, I bought
13 forty-six thousand dollars of goods from other small
14 businesses in this area to resell. Such businesses as Bare
15 Naked Granola, which is out of business, or Go Boy Soap in
16 New Milford. I can give you the names of about sixty small
17 businesses that I buy from and resell.

18 I also grow and provide on the farm a place for
19 youngsters from Norwalk High School to come and get their
20 first jobs. I think Shelton -- we looked at this in the
21 Bethel economic development issue -- is a good example of a
22 town that has married farming and open space, good
23 successful farms with their economic development. There's
24 very large corporate parts of their walkways and things.
25 And to me, of course -- since I'm organic and since I'm

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1 local -- and I only sell at my farm six days a week -- I
2 represent, in this area, a business that generates about
3 three hundred thousand dollars in sales; that's my gross
4 sales at the farm. And it's a business that generates a
5 lot of customers for the Town of Bethel coming in from --
6 the last speaker indicated there is no farm in Weston --
7 many of our customers are from Weston or other areas. So
8 we draw people to our orchard -- a tremendous number of
9 people.

10 So as opposed to overlooking what we do -- not because
11 we have chickens and we have pigs and what have you -- we
12 also generate a lot of business, if we're running the
13 business right. So I moved from the corporate world to the
14 small world, and it's not a small world. It has the same
15 principles and business practices, so it's a successful
16 small world in the State of Connecticut for organics. We
17 moved in, we help each other, we're starting a farm in
18 Richfield, helping them get started. We're starting one in
19 Wellington, which is a town farm (unintelligible). I would
20 strongly urge that as you (unintelligible) that you will
21 see us as an element and that you don't treat us as just
22 gee, they're really nice out here with nice buildings. We
23 are really generating business for the State of
24 Connecticut. Thank you.

25 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you, sir. Patrick

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1 Harding.

2 MR. HARDING: Hello. Thank you for the
3 opportunity to speak tonight. I am sitting on the chair
4 of the performing arts here at West Conn, and I'm here
5 just to reiterate a lot of what people have said and what
6 President Shumata (phonetic) has spoken about. I just
7 want to talk a little more about the impact of the arts on
8 the community.

9 There are many examples of communities that have
10 benefited economically from supporting the arts. If you
11 just look at North Wolcott in the contemporary arts --
12 increased payroll, property values increased, new

13 businesses sprung up. Ninety-four thousand new visitors
14 from outside the county. We can go to Edinboro, who has
15 the largest art festival in the world, every two years to
16 take our students on a trip to perform there. And if you
17 saw the amount of the impact of the -- and the growth of
18 all kinds of businesses from hotels, to restaurants and
19 pubs, and clothing stores; every kind of business is
20 affected. In a short time I think you've probably seen --
21 I've seen with the new attraction of film companies to
22 shoot in Connecticut. I've already seen the impact at West
23 Conn, people have come to ask us to rent space.

24 Three of our students who work in New York have come
25 back to work in the State to work in the film business, so

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1 this has already had an impact on the State's economy and
2 will continue to grow. We're producing Tommy right now,
3 the musical of Who's Tommy, and just in our way we support
4 local businesses; we buy lumber, we buy fabric, we buy
5 tools. We spent thousands and thousands of dollars for our
6 productions. We just set up a new school for visual and
7 performing arts here at West Conn, but we're still waiting
8 for our building. And I think people minimize the
9 impact -- the economic impact that establishes a cultural
10 and intellectual senate it can have on the local people.

11 So I think -- I'm just really here to say that it's
12 vital that we prioritize an art's education in the State,
13 whether it be supporting a fine arts centers or even
14 building transportation, increasing the resources we have
15 for people to get around the community. We know that the

16 arts are vital to a quality of life -- to the quality of
17 life and vital to the economic growth. But I think that
18 the State, as it reeks new so well, the State has
19 responsibility to maintain the arts to ensure that we will
20 live in a free society. And that, I think, is very
21 important, so thank you, very much.

22 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you, sir. Joyce
23 Barkely.

24 MS. BARKELY: Good evening and thank you.
25 I thought my commute from Bridgeport was long. Thank you

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1 very much for offering the opportunity to have
2 constituents from around the State in a broad variety to
3 create an economic plan that will be comprehensive and
4 take in a variety of perspectives. My name is Joyce
5 Barkely, I represent the Valley Council for Health and
6 Community Services.

7 The Valley Council is a network of organizations
8 consisting of thirty-seven nonprofit agencies servicing the
9 community of Lower Naugatuck Valley, namely Ansonia, Beacon
10 Falls, Derby, Oxford, Seymour and Shelton. The Valley
11 Council's members include medical health providers,
12 property agencies, childcare agencies, workforce
13 development organizations, private foundations, community
14 recreations, legal services, housing, transportation,
15 education, regional chamber of commerce and the community
16 hospital. Translated into economic terms, the Valley
17 Council for Health and Community Services represents
18 thirty-seven businesses that jointly employ more than

19 twenty-three hundred Connecticut residents. Collectively
20 we provide more than three hundred thousand units to
21 Connecticut residents every year.

22 Nonprofits are like other businesses; we're treated by
23 the local economy by paying rent, mortgages, utilities,
24 building maintenance costs and landscaping fees. We pay
25 social security, unemployment and income taxes on behalf of

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1 more than twenty-three hundred employees. These employees
2 also contribute to the economy by renting or owning
3 properties, which contribute to community goods and
4 services, and paying their taxes. Why then are Connecticut
5 nonprofit organizations -- which employ nearly twelve
6 percent of Connecticut's labor forces, with different rules
7 from other businesses, are precluded from consideration and
8 support in economic development and planning.

9 Connecticut manufacturers and small business have
10 expressed the hardships they face with increased cost of
11 doing business in Connecticut. Nonprofit businesses face
12 those same hardships; however, nonprofit organizations,
13 unlike many for-profit businesses, cannot simply increase
14 our cost to cover our bottom line. Our customers, who
15 desperately need our services to become and remain a vital
16 network and workers in our community, in our ever changing
17 economy, are also typically people who cannot afford to
18 increase their costs. We, as a nonprofit service provider,
19 can deliver stabilization services, such as public youth
20 intervention, behavior and mental health counseling,
21 quality child care are the safety net that help businesses

22 thrive.

23 Many services provided by nonprofits were created and
24 sponsored by state legislation to fill gaps in critical
25 services for our residents, yet Connecticut's nonprofits

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1 received little to no organization support in the economic
2 development planning and State budget deliberations. Over
3 the last years operating costs have skyrocketed well beyond
4 ten, twenty and, in a case of health insurance, thirty
5 percent. In the next year's State's budget, there is zero
6 increase to help offset the increases that we face in
7 operating our businesses. It is difficult to operate under
8 such conditions, let alone retain quality staff.

9 The question then becomes who will provide the vital
10 services, and at what cost, if companies cannot keep their
11 doors open. The burden will shift from the legislative
12 nonprofit to the municipality and the State. The old
13 saying of an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure
14 cannot ring more true. We've witnessed in the past with
15 programs created beyond the social premise the nonprofit
16 organizations are forced to close their doors. Millions of
17 taxpayers not only will be needed, but needed to be spent
18 to reinforce, reinvent and duplicate services that have
19 once been in place, but lost to a shortsighted plan.

20 To prevent this crisis I urge you to include
21 nonprofits in the Connecticut economic development plan
22 process, and to promote a State budget that supports
23 economic growth for all of Connecticut's business and all
24 of Connecticut's employers. Thank you.

25 MR. MCMI LLEN: Thank you. Wayne Shepard.

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1 MR. SHEPARD: Good evening. As our ci ty's
2 di rector of economi c devel opment, I'm del ighted that
3 you're here, parti cular ly that you brought so many
4 out-of-town ers. There's a bunch of hotels in Danbury,
5 also some fi ne di ning along Mi ll Pl ain Road out here, as
6 well .

7 Often times my phone rings and it's a business owner
8 from out of state, and the first word out of her or his
9 mouth is I want to bring my business to Danbury, what are
10 you going to do for me? And I typically say I'm going to
11 put my arm around you and hug you. They then hang the
12 phone up and take their busi ness to Mi chi gan. So I'm
13 trying to avoid that as much as possi ble. Obvi ously,
14 that's an exaggerati on. Danbury has a tax deferment
15 program that we have used ni cely, your fol ks have been
16 terri fic to me, we have great communi cation wi th your staff
17 and ours. Yet, there are times when I feel like I'm on a
18 more formal presen tati on than we could make, perhaps some
19 more li terature that can be applica ble throug hout the State
20 of Connecti cut.

21 parti cular ly, in our case, we have a course of good
22 busi nesses in our ci ty, yet we need to expand that base.
23 We are not an enterpri se zone and we're not Stamford. So
24 we fall somewhere in a crack of trying to get someone to
25 move a busi ness to our main stream area where we feel we

1 need to re-engineer a bit. So something along those lines
2 have been known to talk about for small businesses that
3 would be helpful.

4 The other quick point that I would like to make is
5 regarding workforce in the nursing area. A key area for us
6 throughout the State of Connecticut, because I believe the
7 number -- the shortage would be eleven thousand nurses
8 short, I forget the time span. But Danbury, we're
9 particularly poised in helping that, because the nursing
10 program here at the University and the Danbury Hospital is
11 a natural linkage, and they partner off as it is now. Yet
12 the key, as you may know, is recruiting teachers to teach
13 the nurses. So if there's some sort of incentive program
14 to bring those folks to our State to help -- and there's so
15 much residual impact in the quality of life by adding the
16 nurses to the nursing population, certainly that would be a
17 big plus for us. Thank you.

18 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you. Steven Bull.

19 MR. BULL: I'm Steven Bull. I'm a member
20 of the greater Danbury chamber, the organization that
21 covers the greater Danbury region. I just want to
22 reiterate a few of the comments that have been made, and I
23 think one comment that may be there's something you can do
24 about.

25 Transportation, of course, is key to this region. We

1 Look at Lower Fairfield County; many have said because of

2 95, they're choking on their success. Of course, we are
3 the recipient of a lot of companies that are now coming up
4 here because of that congestion. The other thing I also
5 want to talk about, again, to reiterate -- John Shu
6 mentioned it -- the importance of the railway. And if you
7 look at our rail line, and compare it to some of the other
8 projects that are being done in other parts of the State,
9 and if you look at what the potential for those are, I
10 think ours are so much greater, so please look at that as
11 you go forward.

12 I'd also like to say that in terms of our interaction
13 with the department of economic development, many times we
14 have had a company that we want to bring to Danbury -- when
15 I say Danbury, I mean the regional chamber -- and many
16 times we call either your agency or another agency, and
17 they'll say well, you know, Danbury doesn't have that
18 distress status. We have the lowest unemployment rating in
19 the State, but, you know, if you go to Waterbury, we've got
20 a program for you over there. So that client is stolen
21 from us. It's just the way the system is.

22 And as John Shu said before, yes, those cities I have
23 (unintelligible) and we pour a lot of money into them, but
24 it's extremely important that we reward excellence, because
25 for excellence to continue you have to also develop

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1 programs that will help us grow this area. The other last
2 thing I want to talk about is we've been very successful,
3 and maybe they changed the criteria on it, because we've
4 never received the money (unintelligible). So when you're

5 lobbying the State or whatever agency, please tell them
6 that. That is an extremely important program. We lent
7 almost half a million dollars in this year, and put it out
8 to some of the companies in our region and they are doing
9 wonderful things with it. They are training employees and
10 hiring new people. So that's my only thought. Thank you,
11 very much.

12 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. Jerry
13 Frederick.

14 MR. FREDERICK: Good evening. My name is
15 Jerry Frederick, and I want to thank you for coming
16 tonight and I appreciate the opportunity to briefly talk.
17 I'm not here to represent anybody, I'm here to represent
18 myself and what I think is a shortcoming of the whole
19 area. We've had many speakers tonight that spoke and I
20 agree with all of them, but we have a problem in this
21 area. And what I'm really looking for is some help.

22 If you want to grow an area you have to build on
23 strength. We have some great strengths here, but we have a
24 problem; we're like a funnel. We have a tremendous amount
25 of acids going in, but we have young kids that have

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1 graduated from this school and they're moving out of State.
2 There are no jobs here for them. There's no entry level
3 jobs where kids can go from this school and get right into
4 a large company. Yes, we have restaurants. Yes, we have a
5 lot of restaurants, and, yes, we have retail, but they're
6 all relatively low paying jobs.

7 I have two children that graduated from this school, I

8 have one that graduated from a school in Rhode Island.
9 They're both gone. They're going to be out of this State.
10 There aren't entry level jobs. If they want a job they
11 have to go to Stamford, which is an hour plus commute, and
12 it's a terrible commute by car. They have to go on the
13 train and go to New York City. Those are the options for
14 the kids that graduate from this college, as well as any
15 other kids that are going to a different college and ones
16 that are coming back home.

17 So I appeal to you, as a former board of education
18 parent, to look at the educational establishment here in
19 the university and try to tie what you're doing in this
20 school with the jobs that you're going to pull into this
21 area. A gentleman just spoke about the nursing program,
22 great idea, but there's a lot of other programs out there
23 that this school is forgetting and there's no place for us
24 to put these kids. Yes, we have a few large companies in
25 the area, but they can't absorb the number of kids that

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1 graduate from here.

2 So I ask you to do that. And I agree with the
3 transportation. It's a horror story. And I commute to
4 Terrytown, New York every day from Brookfield and it is
5 terrible. And I know a lot of people that do it. And you
6 sit on 84 bumper to bumper. So I appeal to you to do that,
7 and also consider New York State. When you hit that
8 borderline, it's like another country over there.
9 Newspapers are growing coverage over there, TV coverage is
10 watch out over there or else you miss New York City.

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11 There's no real coverage fifteen miles in that direction,
12 but there's plenty of coverage in Hartford. It's an hour.
13 We need to take an awareness approach to things. So that
14 will help us build. We have the strength here, we're
15 asking you to build it. Thank you.

16 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. Marsha
17 Hopkins.

18 MS. HOPKINS: I want to encourage the
19 development of public transportation for passengers and
20 (unintelligible). Stop pouring many dollars into new
21 construction of highways and adopt a fix it first policy
22 that other states has, such as New Jersey. In this part
23 of the State, particularly, I encourage the development of
24 the Metro North Danbury line. The riders there has
25 increased quite a bit, and they've been studying this for

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1 several years. This increasing public transportation are
2 for those that must use them (unintelligible) and also it
3 would help to reduce the CO2 in the air.

4 Encourage the development in an existing population
5 center where the service already exists (unintelligible).
6 It is necessary to meet its building codes and keep it up
7 to standards. Development also on an existing Brownfield
8 site after they've been cleaned up, and also revamping the
9 State and local approval screening processes. In speaking
10 with developers, they talk about the years it sometimes
11 takes to get all the necessary approvals and permits. And,
12 finally, encourage towns to work together regionally. It's
13 less expensive in the long run. Avoid duplication and

14 eliminate programs caused in one town by a neighboring town
15 development. Thank you.

16 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you. Those are all
17 the speakers who have signed up. Is there anyone else who
18 would like to speak?

19 MR. HU: My name is Jason Hu (phonetic).
20 I'm a businessman in Stamford, Connecticut. This is a
21 very wonderful forum to exchange perspectives. And I've
22 benefited from many of the great people in Connecticut,
23 including some of the people in development. My skill up
24 in the early days was high technology in business. As I
25 grew older I got into globalization, but I think the -- I

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1 got history -- you know, work. And I think there's a lot
2 of, you know, good things already there. We just need
3 those businessmen to put them together; but I think in
4 this meeting also get some aspect of the challenges for
5 the small business. High value is how you not only build
6 business, but smaller business.

7 So I think that's all the challenges and
8 opportunities. And I won't spend too much time on those
9 details, but Connecticut has been very successful in some
10 key industries, like advanced industry, high value, high
11 profit financial. So this is at a momentum, but how do we,
12 you know, create new directions into -- fit into the future
13 high gross global business. I think there's some kind of
14 mindset, and some habits can be reviewed to see what is it
15 for the really global private advance to come to
16 Connecticut, and to retain. I think that's an area that's

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17 very, very important, because we are indeed a global
18 competitive area. Thank you.

19 MR. MCMILLEN: Thank you, sir. Is there
20 anyone else who would like to speak? Okay. I think we'll
21 take a break, and if anybody else comes in, we'll keep the
22 hearing open. Please feel free to come and talk to us.
23 Thank you all for coming.

24

25 (A break was taken at 6:50 p.m.)

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(Forum concluded at 7:23 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT:
COUNTY OF HARTFORD:

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I, SAMANTHA M. HOWELL, a Notary Public duly
commissioned and qualified in and for the State of
Connecticut, do hereby certify that the foregoing 71 pages
are a complete and accurate computer-aided transcription of
my Stenotype notes taken on January 29, 2008.

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I further certify that I am a Notary Public duly
commissioned and qualified to administer oaths in the State
of Connecticut.

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In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand
this 15th day of February, 2008.

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Samantha M. Howell
Notary Public

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My Commission expires:
September 31, 2011

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Danbury.txt

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