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EMBARGOED UNTIL SPEECH DELIVERY
7:45 PM - March 10, 2011

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Bramson Lays “Foundation” For Economic Progress *State of the City Speech Addresses Planning & Fiscal Challenges*

NEW ROCHELLE, NY – Delivering his sixth State of the City speech before a standing-room-only crowd, New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson outlined planning, development and environmental objectives intended to lay a “stronger foundation for a prosperous and vibrant” community.

Calling this a moment of “undeniable challenge,” Bramson opened by noting that the national economy had imposed “hard choices” on families, businesses and municipalities. He listed actions taken by the City government to reduce costs and control the local tax burden and pledged a continuing emphasis on efficiency and austerity to meet the “urgent needs of the here and now.”

Nonetheless, Bramson’s primary focus was on the future. “Even in this difficult climate,” he said, “the opportunities for progress are real and significant.” To pursue these opportunities, Bramson offered an ambitious agenda, including:

- **Intensified economic development efforts, focused on New Rochelle’s downtown area.** Bramson offered a mixed portrayal of downtown’s current condition, noting recent improvements, but also describing areas of distress. He argued for an aggressive outreach to new development partners and for a more diversified strategy for attracting investment.
- **Creation of a new Comprehensive Plan to guide major land use and zoning decisions and successfully manage anticipated growth.** Bramson noted New Rochelle’s leadership role in a regional planning consortium that has already attracted \$3.5 million in funding from the Department of Housing & Urban Development and which could foster “better connections between workers, employers and customers.”
- **Renewed focus on the New Rochelle waterfront to claim it for public use and enjoyment.** Bramson applauded the work of the Task Force that is currently considering re-use options for Davids Island. And Bramson described a patient and persistent approach to the Echo

Bay shoreline, saying the site could “shape the character of New Rochelle for a century or more.”

- **Reordering of municipal spending priorities to achieve better investment in infrastructure and equipment.** Bramson called New Rochelle’s present levels of infrastructure investment “unsustainable” and inadequate to sustain our quality of life, property values or economy. He proposed shifting resources into capital needs, with a goal of allocating at least 5% of the city’s budget to such priorities by 2016. Bramson also urged immediate steps to maximize New Rochelle’s access to grants.
- **Adoption of New Rochelle’s first Sustainability Plan, GreeNR.** Bramson described GreeNR’s major objectives, including energy conservation, environmental protection, and public participation, and he said the Plan would “provide residents with information and expanded options,” while also “saving money in both the public and private sectors.” After a year-long review, the City Council is currently poised to approve GreeNR.

Bramson concluded his remarks in a confident tone. Speaking in personal terms about the character of New Rochelle and its history of overcoming challenges, Bramson asserted that the community already possessed “everything that we need to shape our future.”

The annual State of the City Address is sponsored by the New Rochelle Chamber of Commerce.

(Full Text of the State of the City Address is Attached, but Embargoed Until Delivery)

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