Recognition and kind words always mean the most when they come from those whom you respect and admire.

So let me say, first, that I have the greatest respect and admiration for John Nolon, whose leadership has been so critical in identifying and acting upon the common interests that bind together the population centers of the lower Hudson Valley, and who is always a generous source of wisdom.

Let me say, second, that whatever accomplishments merit this award are certainly not personal in nature. They are the achievements of a team. So I want to thank my colleagues who are here, as well as the many others in New Rochelle who have applied themselves to planning, to sustainability, to regional cooperation, to forward-looking development. I feel very privileged to work with such partners.

Third, I want to acknowledge my colleagues from other communities. One of the most enjoyable aspects of the Redevelopment Roundtable has been the opportunity to get to know mayors and administrators more fully. We face challenges that are at once alike and distinct. I've learned a lot from the other participants. And I like them, too, which always helps.

Yesterday, I emailed John and Jennie to say: I presume the award should be received with a quick thank you, then over and out, rather than a lengthy policy discussion. And John replied to suggest something in between – spend a few minutes talking about the importance of sustainability and about our efforts in New Rochelle.

But I really do think that I'd be preaching to the converted on those subjects. Or maybe the more apt analogy is the student presuming to lecture the teacher, because there are many here who are far more knowledgeable than me. So instead, I will leave you with just one point.

Every city right now is facing pressures and challenges that are as severe as any in my lifetime. In New Rochelle, we are wrapping-up our fourth straight difficult budget, each more painful than the prior, each woefully underfunding a range of services and investments -- while predictably and understandably stirring public discontent. I imagine all the mayors and managers here could offer similar testimony.

When you are beset by so many urgent and immediate needs that cannot be fully met, and when the here and now is standing insistently at your door, knocking louder and louder in its demand for attention . . . the easiest thing to do is abandon the efforts and the investments aimed at tomorrow. And that's probably also the worst thing to do.

Because a vision that stops at the present day lays no path to better days. And a plan of action that confines itself only to the moment, however robust and timely it may seem, however well calibrated to the most pressing public demands, is in the end a prescription for eventual and perpetual failure. Now is when looking ahead is most important.

So all of us need to find a way to reframe the debate about public priorities, so that it is not seen as

a contest between Police and planners, or between traditional infrastructure and green infrastructure, because let me tell you that the planners and the bio-swales will never win that match-up.

Instead, the choice needs to be posed and understood as the present vs. the future. Valuing ourselves or our children. How do we measure our responsibilities as public servants and as citizens.

What I am proudest of in New Rochelle is not necessarily the specifics of our Sustainability Plan, or our efforts with RPA on the Sustainable Communities Initiative, or the reboot of our Comp Plan that's underway, or our fresh look at Davids Island – although I feel good about all those things.

What I am proudest of is that, even at a difficult moment, we've been able to keep one eye on tomorrow, and that, as a result, New Rochelle is and will be a stronger community.

My thanks to each of you for what you have taught me about these duties and opportunities. God and the electorate willing, I will be honored to work with you in the years to come.