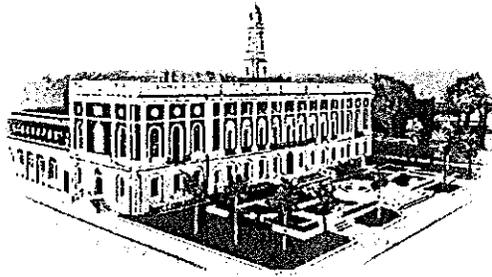


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MICHAEL J. JARJURA
MAYOR



JOSEPH A. GEARY
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
THE CITY OF WATERBURY
CONNECTICUT

February 28, 2011

To: Senator Stillman and Representative Guerrera; members of the Transportation Committee:

Re: Request for Funding of Evening Bus Service in Waterbury

I am here today on behalf of the City of Waterbury and Mayor Michael J. Jarjura. The Mayor submitted testimony to you, which is in your packet. I would like to summarize the major points of that testimony and answer any questions that you might have. I would also like to make some additional comments of my own.

The City of Waterbury is requesting your Committee's support for funding of evening bus service within the City of Waterbury.

The City recognizes that such a request comes at an inopportune time, in light of the State's severe budgetary constraints and fiscal crisis. However, it is important to recognize that the provision of this service is not a luxury or an extra, but a *necessity*, if the City of Waterbury is to address the very problems that have created our state's business and economic woes – educating our children for the jobs of the future, building links between education and jobs; creating a business-friendly climate that grows and attracts businesses and spurs entrepreneurship; and, providing opportunities for our youth to stay in Connecticut with urban centers that are vital and prosperous.

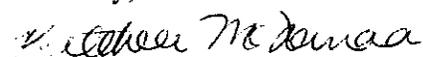
- ***The City of Waterbury is the only major city in Connecticut that lacks evening bus service.*** This means that our disadvantaged residents lack public transportation to attend evening classes at the downtown UCONN campus or Naugatuck Valley Community College (NVCC) located on the perimeter of the city, to go to a shopping mall in the evening; to reach social services; to return home from the community college to their neighborhood. One simple thing that residents of other cities take for granted- the ability to take a public bus after 6:00 p.m. in the evening. With 20% of Waterbury residents lacking a car, record high unemployment for ten consecutive years, and a family poverty rate that is three times the state level, *our City's lack of evening public transportation service is a glaring social and economic inequity.*

- As stated by the Mayor, for Connecticut to succeed, all of Connecticut's large cities will have to be competitive - if not how can we nurture a healthy and diverse economic portfolio? Our cities are regional hubs for jobs, health care and culture. If our cities fail, the suburbs around them will also flounder. Waterbury is home to 4,873 businesses with 11,844 commuters into our City. Waterbury has twice the national average in terms of percentage of workers who take public transportation to work. *They just can't use public transportation for second shift.*
- Our two major hospitals provide care through the metropolitan region and are home to 29% of the beds in New Haven County. In addition, our City provides social services to the neediest persons in the state, with the number of Waterbury's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients three times the state average, thus alleviating the burden on suburban towns. *Yet, our neediest persons have no access to public transportation in the evening.*
- Like the other major cities of Connecticut, Waterbury faces severe challenges and bears disproportionate burdens and services in our role as a regional hub and service center. You know the reality- if not, the statistics are available in the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities' *A Tale of Disproportionate Burden* (March 2009). In order to be that hub and offer those services, our City has to be able to offer our citizens a very basic service- *it's not frivolous or non-essential and that is the ability to step on a bus after 6:00 p.m.*

I personally would like to add some additional remarks to points addressed in the letter by Mayor Jarjura. As Grants Administrator, one of my tasks is tracking the future direction of grant dollars on both the state and federal level. In Washington, the emphasis is on "Sustainability." In fact, the federal government has created an "Office of Sustainability," with three major departments - EPA, DOT and HUD - partnering to offer grants that support the building of livable, sustainable communities. The idea is that we create transit oriented development by marrying housing, transportation options and environmental sustainability. On the state level, we talk about high speed rail; rapid bus; reducing our carbon footprint; green building; smart growth. We're all planning this better, more enlightened future.

I have to say, that in light of all this, it is inconceivable to me, that in this day and age, that the residents of any major City would lack the basic ability to use a bus in the evening. I ask your attention to this matter and your help for our City. I ask you to advocate for our residents and our City to right this basic social, economic and quality of life inequity.

Sincerely,



Kathleen McNamara
Grants Administrator