

2022 Inaugural Address
Monday, November 7, 2022 at 7:00pm

Introduction

As Richmond City Council enters a new four-year term, I would like to thank the people of Richmond for your confidence and trust in me as your Mayor and in our new Council. Once again, our Council consists of a mixture of newcomers and veterans. None of us under-estimates the importance of the position. Each of us will ensure that Richmond remains a wonderful community in which to live, work, play and invest.

I want to take a moment to once again acknowledge the longstanding service of retiring Councillors Linda McPhail and Harold Steves. During their tenure, their insight into civic issues contributed greatly to the quality of our decisions. Our community owes them a large debt of gratitude for their integrity and long service.

A special welcome goes to our two new City Councillors, Laura Gillanders and Kash Heed. Their energy, diverse backgrounds and knowledge will be great assets as we work together to provide strong, thoughtful and caring leadership for the City.

Looking ahead, in the coming weeks, our new Council will work together to develop a roadmap for the coming term and set the future direction. Among others, our reflections tonight will include a focus on several key areas:

1. Housing Affordability;
2. Community Safety;
3. Infrastructure;
4. Bringing our Community Together; and
5. Official Community Plan.

1. Housing affordability

Few issues have attracted more attention over the past term than housing affordability.

Every City in the Province is facing this challenge. During the past term, Council implemented a variety of actions to support more housing options and enable more residents, including their families, to continue to call Richmond home.

For instance, Council increased the minimum number and type of Low End Market Rental Units in City Centre developments as well as the requirement for provision of market rentals.

Assisting those who have no home has become a growing challenge and a top priority, not just here in Richmond but throughout the Lower

Mainland. The previous Council oversaw the opening of over 100 modular housing units for residents experiencing or at risk of losing their homes. In addition, a shelter at Horseshoe Way, an Emergency Response Shelter at Minoru, and a warming centre were all aspects of the City's Homelessness Strategy.

The provision of housing requires action by all levels of government in addition to other partners. Council will continue our push to bring even more affordable housing options to our city.

2. Community Safety

Richmond remains one of B.C.'s safest communities with a relatively low crime rate along with outstanding public safety services and facilities.

During the past term, Council hired additional RCMP officers and firefighters. The City Centre Community Police Office opened while the Fox 80 mental health vehicle partnership program between the City, RCMP and Vancouver Coastal Health continued to actively respond to those in need.

An additional aspect of safety, the City's ongoing commitment to flood protection, proved invaluable in 2021 as the region endured a devastating Atmospheric River. Our community, despite being situated

on an island just above sea level, was relatively unaffected due to our extensive dyke and pump station network.

3. Infrastructure

As one of Canada's most desirable cities, Richmond's rich cultural diversity, proximity to the Asia-Pacific market and a wealth of accessible, well-managed parks, trails and dykes provided an attractive location for more than 230,000 residents and over 14,000 businesses. With our residents already leading the country in longevity, Richmond was recently named BC's most active community.

Council's long-term commitments to well-managed growth and investments in infrastructure have created a vibrant, dynamic community in addition to support for the construction of world class, award-winning facilities.

Completion of the Minoru Centre for Active Living, expansion of the Lulu Island District Energy program, enhancements to our 49 kilometres of dykes, and the creation of new community parks are further examples of Council's recent commitment to building a strong, active and engaged community.

In the coming term, we expect to see numerous infrastructure projects come to completion, such as:

1. The new Steveston Community Centre and Library;
2. Capstan Canada Line Station;
3. Capstan Community Centre; and
4. The new Minoru Cultural Centre Annex for the arts.

Progress is expected on projects such as:

1. Construction of the replacement Massey Crossing along with the upgraded Steveston Highway / Highway 99 interchange; and
2. Further investment in environmentally-friendly transportation options such as cycling and EV technology.

4. Bringing our community together

Richmond's rich cultural diversity and heritage are added elements that make our unique community desirable. Unfortunately, with that multicultural mix comes challenges.

The pandemic fostered increased amounts of negativity aimed especially towards those of various cultural backgrounds. When anti-Asian hate was particularly frequent, Council took a stand through a

formal declaration against racism. We also supported various anti-racism initiatives such as the RCMP's "Hate Has No Place" campaign.

During its past term, Council supported inclusive Pride Week activities including the creation of the City's first Rainbow Crosswalk on Minoru Blvd. near City Hall. We also introduced a comprehensive Cultural Harmony Strategy, the first of its kind in Canada.

Going forward, this new Council will work together to identify further policies and initiatives that serve to bring our community together while we build an environment of safety and inclusiveness. Our Cultural Harmony Plan will form a large part of that strategy.

5. Official Community Plan

As Richmond grows, Council needs to refresh the vision and goals to ensure that effective change takes place. One way to do that is through our Official Community Plan ("OCP").

The OCP enables Council to plan, co-ordinate and manage the City's sustainability, social, economic and land use interests over the next two decades. It provides the road map to identify areas of future growth along with the appropriate land use, density, and architectural character. Residents, community groups, developers and investors

will then envision appropriate development proposals and make applications involving zoning, development and servicing.

The City will commence an update to the current OCP in the coming months involving a process of analysis, engagement and consultation. We want to ensure it reflects the current and future needs of the community. Everyone will be encouraged to participate in the process.

Conclusion

To conclude I would like to thank everyone who participated in the democratic election process, whether as a candidate, staff, volunteer or voter. The new City Council looks forward to the next four years as we work together to diligently fulfill our commitments.

Much of the expected success in this term will be due to the support of our engaged community and partners as well as the many generous volunteers who become involved in every City initiative.

At the City, we are also fortunate to have an experienced team of professionals who are dedicated to preserving our high quality of life. They help to implement needed programs, services and infrastructure for the benefit of our residents and businesses.

We look forward to facing the challenges and opportunities in the coming term as we build a strong, sustainable future for our City.