Mayor Rob Howard's Inaugural Speech: November 2, 2026

Family. Friends. Neighbours. Fellow Richmond residents.

Thank you for the trust you have placed in me to serve as Mayor of our great city.

Together, at the Council table, we have been entrusted with something special, a city with a proud history, a strong financial foundation, and a reputation for responsible fiscal management.

For generations, Richmond has balanced today's needs with tomorrow's opportunities, Keeping taxes competitive, maintaining strong reserves, and delivering the quality services residents and businesses depend on.

This is a legacy we can all be proud of, and one we must work together to protect.

Like communities across Metro Vancouver, Richmond faces growing challenges, from housing pressures and rising costs to increasing demands on infrastructure.

These realities make responsible leadership, sound financial management, and thoughtful decision-making more important than ever.

Challenges also bring opportunities. To strengthen our neighbourhoods, support our local economy, improve public services, and ensure Richmond remains one of the best places in the Province to raise a family and build a future.

I come to this table with humility, a deep sense of duty, and great optimism for what we can accomplish together.

To everyone around this table, we share something important: a deep love for Richmond and a commitment to serving its residents.

Each of us brings different experiences, perspectives and strengths. That diversity is one of our greatest assets as a Council. Together, we bring decades of experience in public safety, a commitment to protecting our farmland, waterways and heritage, and a wealth of business, organizational, community and leadership experience.

We also recognize that many of the challenges facing Richmond cannot be addressed by the City alone. Building strong relationships with provincial and federal partners, and

ensuring Richmond's voice is heard, will be essential.

We won't always agree, and that's okay. Strong leadership means listening to one another, respecting different perspectives and finding common ground. Ultimately, that leads to better decisions for our city.

Working together with mutual respect, fresh ideas, and a shared commitment to putting Richmond and its residents first.

All along, my vision for Richmond has been guided by one simple idea, giving our residents peace of mind. Peace of mind knowing their families are safe. Knowing their tax dollars are being spent responsibly and knowing that young families and seniors are supported, respected and cared for.

There are several priorities I would like us to take forward together. First, public safety. I remain committed to Richmond's position on supervised injection facilities. I have already agreed to put a motion, on this topic, on the Agenda this week, and look forward to debating its substance. Second, accountability and responsible spending. I will ask Council to support an independent Value for Money review to identify efficiencies, improve services and ensure every tax dollar delivers value. Other Cities have found meaningful savings through this kind of exercise, and I believe it can deliver similar results for Richmond. Third, housing, in particular, our seniors, who have contributed so much to our community. They deserve the opportunity to age with dignity, security and peace of mind

So we will work with staff to reduce unnecessary wait times and explore innovative options that allow young families to put down roots, and seniors to age comfortably, in the community they call home.

Around this table, working with our professional staff, we have the experience and the expertise to build a bright future for our city….A city that works for everyone.

And just look at what we can do when we work together. When the Cowichan decision came down, Richmond rose up to stand against it. We demanded a written, legally-binding commitment that the Cowichan Nation would not come after private property and late last month, we learned that lawyers for the Cowichan Nation are working on a proposal to protect private property rights.

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You spoke. We listened. And apparently, so did they.

I support wholeheartedly the proposal to waive Development Cost Charges so that a new Lions Manor can be built in Steveston and I have already received a letter from the Provincial Deputy Minister of infrastructure, in response to my earlier letter, clarifying construction of the Hospital will proceed.

During the campaign I also spoke of Richmond as a waterfront City, a gateway City, a city that lives up to its incredible promise. We will engage immediately in creating a plan for an arts and cultural centre at our City Centre waterfront. A place where families can stroll, Seniors can gather and the community can come together. We will talk to stakeholders and senior levels of government to get to work on building a world class Trade and exhibition centre, right here in Richmond, further cementing Richmond as THE Gateway to the Pacific, we have a world class, award winning airport right here, we have seaports, we have highway corridors … ALL that connect us to the world.

AND of course we have the people…

We have the people that live here, work here, run businesses here and raise their families here, all are part of our community and already have the connections we need to further succeed as a Gateway city.

These are just a few priorities that will help us build on a proud legacy for our city. All of this is to do the right thing by our taxpayers. Working together, all of us, Mayor & Council, city staff, residents and businesses… I know that we can move Richmond forward into a bright future. Strong, and united, building a city that works for everyone, building a city that lives up to its incredible promise!

Let's. get. this. done!