

File No. 04-1000-20-2016-111

May 12, 2016

s.22(1)

Dear s.22(1) :

Re: Request for Access to Records under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the "Act")

I am responding to your request of April 4, 2016 for:

Copies of the four speeches written and supplied by Social Signal, related to the April 23, 2015 and Dec. 31, 2015 entries in the Mayor's Discretionary Fund for 2015.

All responsive records are attached.

Under section 52 of the Act you may ask the Information & Privacy Commissioner to review any matter related to the City's response to your request. The Act allows you 30 business days from the date you receive this notice to request a review by writing to: Office of the Information & Privacy Commissioner, info@oipc.bc.ca or by phoning 250-387-5629.

If you request a review, please provide the Commissioner's office with: 1) the request number assigned to your request (#04-1000-20-2016-111); 2) a copy of this letter; 3) a copy of your original request for information sent to the City of Vancouver; and 4) detailed reasons or grounds on which you are seeking the review.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Freedom of Information Office at foi@vancouver.ca if you have any questions.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Van Fraassen', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Barbara J. Van Fraassen, BA
Director, Access to Information
City Clerk's Department, City of Vancouver
Email: Barbara.vanfraassen@vancouver.ca

Encl.

:jb

**Mayor Gregor Robertson
Inauguration Address
December 8, 2014**

Check against delivery

Thank you all for joining us today.

We are grateful to be gathered on Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil Waututh territory, and we offer our thanks to the Coast Salish people.

Sat Sri Akaal
Jee aya noo

Magandang hapon sa inyong lahat po.

Gok wai ho.
Gèwèi- péngyǒu, gèwèi-lái bīn, dàjiā hǎo !
Jīntiān, wǒ- hěn- róngxìng- lái dào- zhèlǐ。

I want to offer my thanks to the outgoing Council, School Board and Parks Board.

And to those who are returning, or joining us for the first time, congratulations. You face very big challenges, but you're taking on one of the most important jobs public life has to offer. And I'm looking forward to working with you all.

As we look forward to the next four years, it's worth reflecting on how far Vancouver has come in the past six.

Six years ago, this city took up some of the great challenges of our time. Climate change and sustainability. Homelessness. Urban affordability. And Vancouver rose to those challenges, coming together with energy, ingenuity and will: sharing insight and offering solutions.

These have been six years of change. Of achievement, but also of hard work. We've asked a lot of each other.

And I am so very proud that when the time came to choose whether to continue on this path, the people of Vancouver came out in larger numbers than we've seen in a dozen years.

Humbled because I recognize that mandate as a challenge to all of us. And it's one worthy of this city.

Far from rejecting a bold progressive vision, the people of Vancouver made it clear they are confident in the agenda we have pursued.

This is a city confident in its mantle of leadership, a mantle global in scope and reach.

Not just confident. Hungry for us to do more, and to do better.

I am grateful for that vote of confidence. And I intend to work my hardest over the next four years to demonstrate that we've heard that call.

It will take work, and it will take an openness to the ideas, perspectives and voices of every member of Council.

I'm proud of the Vision platform, but there are solid, innovative ideas that the Green Party advanced in the campaign. The NPA offered ideas to improve transparency that merit attention. COPE may not have an elected voice on Council, but the principles and values they advocated will.

Every one of your new and returning councillors has valuable skills and experience to offer. And we owe it to the people who elected us to put those skills and experience to work on their behalf, on everything from affordable homes and a greener city to creating new artist spaces, protecting heritage and supporting local businesses.

When we do, we'll be able to count on the dedicated women and men who work for this city. Being able to count on their commitment—their professionalism—their pride in the work they do and the city they serve—is one of the great pleasures of public service in Vancouver.

And so is engaging with the communities we serve. A responsive, effective city must be open both to established voices, and also to those who speak from the margins.

We've done much to make this a more open and inclusive city. Innovative approaches to consultation and dialogue. Embracing communities and taking the lead in advancing human rights issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. Addressing historic wounds and divisions.

But we all know we must do better.

We will continue to call on all of Vancouver to join the conversations about the tough issues. But more than that, let's challenge each other to do better and do more to knit our community together. To volunteer, to check in on a neighbour, to express our love for this city and each other in actions large and small.

We are stronger when we work together, wiser when we listen to each other. And we will need that strength and wisdom to tackle the challenges of the next four years with confidence.

That's important not just for Vancouver, but for all of Canada.

Our country is waking up to the importance of our nation's cities. Last weekend, I joined 52,000 fans in BC Place to watch the Grey Cup.

And three of those fans were the mayors of Calgary, Edmonton and Winnipeg.

The way things are going, I may have the pleasure of inviting a few more of Canada's mayors to Vancouver in June for a Stanley Cup final.

Strong, dynamic, vibrant cities drive our economy. They power innovation—commercial, social and cultural. They move our country forward.

The priorities we've set out for Vancouver are shared by every city in Canada. And those priorities must carry far more weight at every level of government.

Next year's federal election is an opportunity for push the cities agenda onto centre stage. And I'll be joining mayors across the country to do just that.

Our economic fundamentals are strong, with declining debt, low taxes, and surging investment in construction and new office towers.

But it's the innovation economy in Vancouver that is taking off, from technology to start-ups to digital media to medical research. World-beating companies growing at home and top-tier talent setting up shop from abroad.

Indeed, the innovation economy is thriving in urban centres across Canada, and we need to elevate the awareness coast to coast of how important Canadian cities are to our economic well-being.

The next four years provide great opportunity for our city, but they also pose challenges. And to keep moving forward, we have to face our challenges head-on.

And there is no challenge that is closer to my heart, that has a greater claim on our moral determination, than ending street homelessness.

We'll continue to work closely with our federal and provincial counterparts—both to meet the urgent needs of impending winter, and to address longer-term issues including mental health and addiction.

Let me repeat something I've said many times before: Ending homelessness isn't an aspiration, or a rhetorical flourish. In a city as wealthy as Vancouver, it's a non-negotiable responsibility for every one of us.

But it's only one facet of poverty, and we must pursue our work for a fairer, more inclusive city on many fronts.

One of the most pressing is that of child poverty.

Just a few days ago, The Tyee posted an article by a schoolteacher named Anna Chudnovsky. She wrote about one of her students, growing up with a single mom who's trying her very best, but still just barely getting by.

She talks about teaching him math: "We're working on adding with regrouping. His family is in utter crisis and he's trying to carry the one."

If he can keep trying to carry the one, we can at least pay attention to the numbers, too. ...Like the 1 in 5 children entering kindergarten in Vancouver who come from low-income families

I know we won't change that overnight—but that should never stop us from doing what we can.

Which is why I'm committed to working with the School Board to double the size of the board's breakfast program, to help feed more vulnerable kids every morning.

Will it end poverty? No. But for many more children, it will mean their growing bodies start every school day with a full stomach. And for many of them, that can make all the difference.

As anyone who pays bills in Vancouver knows, though, you don't have to be living in poverty to find it hard to make ends meet.

Affordability has to be front and centre on our agenda. The citizens who contributed to the affordability task force developed a wide range of recommendations that we'll be adopting in the coming months.

One of the most important is recognizing the need for housing solutions between the tower and the single-family dwelling.

If we want affordable homes, if we want vibrant communities, then Vancouver needs to build more townhouses and row houses. We need to build more low-rises and mid-rises.

They can help to give us the mix of housing that creates affordable options across the housing spectrum.

And we'll move forward with our new Affordable Housing Agency, using city-owned land to deliver affordable homes for families with modest incomes.

Homes for purchase. And a dramatic increase in the number of homes to rent, at affordable rates.

Families renting homes in Vancouver deserve a better option than paying palace-sized rents on postage-stamp apartments.

Yes, rising prices are a consequence of growth and prosperity. Affordability is a non-stop challenge in a city like ours. But that doesn't mean we have to allow working and middle-class families to be priced out of town.

Or accept that our emerging artists and creative entrepreneurs should look elsewhere for putting down roots

We are only succeeding, our communities are only thriving, when people from all backgrounds can afford to call this great city home.

You know, one of the things I hear again and again from people is how proud they are that our city has taken such a position of global leadership on climate and sustainability.

And however green our laurels may be, Vancouver isn't about to sit on them.

The coming year will be pivotal worldwide for climate commitments. Cities like Vancouver have to speak out, and lead.

We will hold firm on our stand to protect our shorelines and our waterways, and to oppose plans that would send a surge of oil tankers through our waters.

We're helping to spark a national conversation about how we pursue a strong, prosperous economy in tandem with a commitment to clean energy.

And we'll continue to support innovation in clean energy and green technologies. These sectors are already creating well-paying jobs for Vancouverites. They're the sectors poised for explosive growth in the years and decades ahead.

This city's sustainability and livability owe a great debt to some bold, visionary decisions of the past. Early in our history, creating Stanley Park. In the 1970s, choosing the community of Strathcona over an eight-lane expressway.

We face such a decision today, and it's no less far-reaching in determining our livability and prosperity for decades to come.

It's the decision to move forward with a Broadway Subway.

The Broadway corridor has become Vancouver's economic, educational, technological and cultural aorta. Congestion has been building for years, and half measures won't begin to cut it.

A subway is the single best thing we can do for our environment and our economy.

And let me repeat what I have said before: I am determined that this will not be cut-and-cover construction. And it won't turn the Broadway streetscape into a wall of glass towers.

We're going to do this right: respecting the character of our communities, and allowing businesses and residents to continue with their lives with a minimum of disruption.

But there's a hurdle to cross first, and it's a big one: the region-wide referendum that's coming in only a few months.

There's no point in debating the fairness of a referendum that road construction never seems to require. It's coming. And it means our city and our region face a critical moment.

I will work with Mayors throughout the region to build public support for better transit. And I want to be able to count on the support of every member of council for a Yes vote.

We don't have to agree on every project. But I know we can agree on the need to expand transit across the region—the need to choose sustainable transportation over a future of gridlock and degraded transit service.

So I want to ask all of you—everyone here today, everyone taking part online—I'm asking you to join this effort. Speak to your friends and neighbours. Volunteer when the campaign begins.

Let's make ours an overwhelming vote for the future of our region: sustainable, prosperous and green.

I said at the outset that we've come a long way in six years. We've taken on the responsibility of leadership, and we're showing the world how a city can be both prosperous and liveable. How we can be sustainable and vibrant. How we can be innovative and just.

And it's a quality of leadership—it's a quality of this proud city—that our achievements only spur us to do more.

That we don't just boast about how far we've come, but use the heights we've scaled to see how much further we can go.

That we don't just bask in accomplishments, but resolve to do more, and do better.

When I think of that spirit, I can think of many individuals from Vancouver's history. One name that comes to mind today is Pat Quinn.

He gave his all to build a winning team—in good seasons and tough ones. To inspire not just his players, and not even just the fans, but this whole city. We remember him today, and for many years to come.

We will need that spirit in the next four years more than any time in our past.

These years will be momentous. The coming year alone will see the thrill of the FIFA Women's World Cup... the historic commitment I hope we'll make to a modern, effective transit system... and the first groundbreaking steps of our new affordable housing agency.

The opportunities and challenges we face, we face together.

We face them with a tremendously diverse community drawn from all the cultures of the world.

We face them with businesses and institutions of higher learning that can go toe to toe with any on the planet.

We face them with a burgeoning tech sector that offers new and bigger opportunities every day.

We face them with a resurgent artistic and cultural voice,
and a creative economy stronger than ever before.

We face them in full partnership with our First Nations, a
partnership that has found new strength through the Year of
Reconciliation, thanks to the strong voices of people like
Karen Joseph, who have built new cultural bridges through
empathy and understanding. Karen, we're grateful to have
you joining us today.

We face the opportunities and challenges of the next four
years... with our eyes to the world... and a confidence that
does this city proud.

Today the world looks to Vancouver. And together, we will
show them what a great city can be.

Wǒ ài wǒmen měilì de chéngshì wēngēhuá

Doh jie dah gah.
Xiè xiè dàjiā.

Dhaanvad, Dhanyavaad, Shukriya

Maraming salamat po

Thank you.

Notes for an address by

Gregor Robertson, Mayor of Vancouver
to the Economic Club of Canada

Toronto, Ontario

February 6, 2015

Check against delivery

Thank you. It's great to be with you all.

One of the great pleasures of being Vancouver's mayor is travelling around the world and across Canada, talking about my city.

And that travel's nearly all by plane. Air travel is amazing, even miraculous at times. The view from 30 thousand feet is spectacular.

But can also be misleading. And that's what struck me this week, flying from Vancouver to Toronto.

From the air, you get the impression that Canada is a vast swath of rural land and wilderness: rocks, trees, lakes and farmland. You see the occasional village or town and the very occasional city. But they're tiny outposts compared to the vast expanse of land.

And in a geographical sense, that is the story of Canada.

It's a story we love to tell ourselves. And why not - the vast open spaces are inspiring. You'll see that story everywhere from "Who Has Seen The Wind" to a Tim Horton's ad.

But in so many ways—ways that matter hugely — our daily reality is much different from the story our physical landscape tells. We're a far more urban nation than that story lets on. More diverse. More complex.

And comforting and familiar though that story is, it isn't completely benign. Because in many ways, our economy is still being managed as though the story of our landscape is the only story that counts.

And we're paying a price for that story.

So today, I want to talk a little about how that story is holding Canada back. And I want to outline a new story of our country. One that recognizes and embraces the contribution of Canada's rural reality. But one that recognizes our urban reality as well—and the extraordinary potential of our cities.

Let's start with the state of Canada's economy. Yesterday, I chaired a meeting of mayors from Canada's big cities. I know the economy is never far from your thoughts, and it was front and centre on our agenda too.

We all took a hard look at the economic picture across the country. And I think it's fair to say this isn't how it was supposed to turn out.

For the past several years, much of the vision from Ottawa has seen Canada's resource economy driving a new era of sustained prosperity. That rising tide was supposed to lift all boats.

I don't have to tell you that a lot of boats today aren't lifting. Many of our traditional sectors are struggling. The price of oil collapsed. And last week, the Canadian dollar reached a six-year low.

We can debate whether they reflect an economic trend or if it's just happenstance that they came together. But what we can't debate is that the Canadian economy has faltered. And many Canadian communities and Canadian families are hurting. Which raises a lot of questions about where we're headed, where we want to go, and how we want to get there.

We are a large, diverse and dynamic nation. And a country like ours only thrives on an economy that's just as large, diverse and dynamic.

It's that diverse and innovative economy that lets us compete and win on the global stage. And the wellspring for that diversity and dynamism—the great locus of Canadian innovation—is Canada's cities.

We are an urban country. Our biggest cities, the Census Metropolitan Areas, account for 72% of our GDP. Half of our GDP comes from the six biggest cities.

Cities are where we assemble that critical mass of entrepreneurs, researchers, creative workers, skilled workers, knowledge workers, professionals, community leaders... that whole range of ingenuity, imagination and skill that brings new ideas to life.

And it's no coincidence that many of our big city mayors – such as myself, Mayor Tory or Mayor Savage in Halifax – have a background in business and entrepreneurship. We're

drawn to the innovation, the experimentation that takes place in our cities.

The diversity in our economy that I'm talking about starts with people. Canada's cities are five times more culturally and ethnically diverse than the rest of Canada.

We draw people from around the world and across the country. On any given day in Vancouver, I'll talk to hospital workers from the Philippines, or software engineers from China, or a medical researcher from Ireland.

Toronto and Vancouver are the second and third most culturally diverse cities on the planet.

And that diversity plays out economically. Statistics Canada reports a very tight correlation between population size and economic diversity.

And with economic diversity comes both stability and innovation. We avoid the Detroit phenomenon, because when one sector stalls, another steps forward. You get efficiencies of municipal infrastructure use. Cross-pollination of ideas and innovations across industries.

Which is why our cities are alive with activity and are the steady engines driving the Canadian economy. Come to Vancouver, and you'll see a boom in cutting-edge health sciences, in clean technology, in creative industries like film, tv and digital media. This coming year, our

metropolitan economy is projected to outperform the province overall by two to one.

Or check out Edmonton. The city has partnered with the University of Alberta to create a business accelerator, TEC Edmonton.

They've spun off 14 companies in the past three years. Their client companies have had job growth of 25% over that period. In just a few short years, they've become one of the world's top 10 university business incubators.

And there are similar stories like that in Winnipeg, in Calgary, in Toronto, in Montreal.

We've become skilled in Canada at building successful cities, at reinventing and renewing them. Look at any list of the world's most liveable cities, the greenest cities, the cities of innovation, and Canadian cities are at or near the top.

Even our Mayors top the global rankings....just ask Naheed about that. And don't worry....if you don't ask him, he'll tell you about it anyways. I hope he likes the sparkly tiara that came with the award.

When I visited New York to talk with Mayor Bloomberg a few years ago, he wanted to talk about Canadian cities and how we're innovating. When I was in Singapore for the World Cities Summit, mayors from around the world made a point of pulling me aside, and telling me how extraordinary cities in Canada are.

Maybe a little more Vancouver than Toronto, but I'm biased.

I'm proud of that success. You should be proud of that success.

The cities we've built together give Canada a competitive advantage. But the sad fact is, we aren't making the most of it—and we're in danger of seeing it erode badly.

We can't go on treating Canada's cities as afterthoughts in federal policy and budgets.

Because although our cities are driving the national economy, there's grit in our gears, and it's getting worse.

And our success stories will get a lot more scarce if people are stuck in gridlock and can't move around in our cities. If our infrastructure is allowed to crumble. If families can't afford to live here.

There are three areas that Canada's big-city mayors have identified as the most urgent items for the federal agenda: transit, infrastructure and housing.

So let's talk about transit first. Friendly rivalries aside, I've often looked to Toronto for inspiration on transit. Over the years, this city has gotten a whole lot right.

But in Toronto and every other city in Canada, demand has outstripped capacity for rapid transit. And that's magnified the pressure of a growing population on our roads and highways.

Every year, congestion costs Toronto's economy six billion dollars. For us in Metro Vancouver, it's \$1 billion. We're literally throwing money away as we jam our residents onto aging roads and bridges.

Relieving that pressure would be an economic boon. And it's hard to imagine a more immediate improvement in people's quality of life than reducing the amount of time they spend tense and miserable, stuck in traffic. That's time they could

be working... or enjoying with family or friends. Giving back to community. Being more productive!

And whether it's the 401 or the DVP, the 417 in Ottawa, the Decarie Expressway in Montreal or the ... there'll be drivers on every one of them tonight wishing the people in the car in front of them were riding transit instead.

Investing in transit isn't just a transportation strategy, it is an economic strategy.

It gets workers to their places of employment. Students to college and university. Shoppers to stores. Families to parks and recreation facilities.

And it frees up roads and highways for the traffic that can't hop on a bus or subway: like getting goods to market, and making the just-in-time economy feasible.

It does all that while improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions.

We have a backlog of transit improvements needed in cities across the country. In Metro Vancouver, mayors representing 23 local governments have developed a 10 year action plan to invest in badly-needed transit and our roads, bridges, seabus, and active transportation. But we'll only be able to put that into effect if we win a referendum this spring for a provincial sales tax increase. And I can tell you, many mayors will be fighting harder for this referendum than they did in their own elections last November.

Other cities are investing too. The City of Ottawa is building its new light rail Confederation Line. Edmonton is building a new 13-kilometer light rail line to downtown.

And to their credit, the federal government is contributing to those projects. But the need is immense, and growing. A comprehensive, national strategy for transit investment is

essential for the health and prosperity of our cities and country. This must be a key priority for all the federal parties in the upcoming election.

The second area of urgency is infrastructure. City roads, bridges, sewage and water treatment—these are all critical to business and community life alike.

And while the federal government has been making some much-appreciated infrastructure investments, we're trying to recover from decades of neglect and disrepair. And the cracks are widening.

Every municipal boil-water advisory ought to be sounding an alarm bell on Parliament Hill. This is Canada in the 21st century; clean drinking water, safe modern waste disposal, up-to-date roadways—these aren't luxury items. These are foundational to successful cities.

And cities are stepping up. In Surrey BC, under Mayor Hepner's leadership, her city is building North America's first-ever organic waste biofuel plant. In two years, it's going to be turning organic waste into renewable fuel — that in turn powers its waste collection vehicles.

But cities alone can't make up for decades of federal and provincial neglect. The current Building Canada Fund is a start, but the investments need to move more readily, with more flexibility, and ultimately more dollars are needed to make a dent in the infrastructure deficit. And every one of those dollars returns \$1.20 to the Federal government and creates jobs in the process.

Finally, I want to address the area that brought me into municipal politics: affordable housing.

We have reached the point where far too many families can't hope to own a home in Vancouver—and where renting is getting less and less attractive.

And while our real estate price tags are becoming legendary, Toronto can hold its own in the unaffordability derby. So can Calgary. So can many other cities.

When we start pricing more and more people out of the housing market, we undercut a key element of what makes our cities successful.

Businesses start finding it harder to attract and retain talent.

Startups can't make it through those first few lean years, because their founders have to make huge mortgage payments.

Couples have to leave as soon as they start a family, because they can't afford the space they'll need.

University and college graduates and skilled workers head to the suburbs—or leave the country altogether—taking our investment in their education with them.

And I haven't even begun to address the impact of homelessness on the social fabric of a community. Or the extra money we spend dealing with homelessness with shelters, police, hospitals, courts and jails.

We're doing what we can as a local government to address affordability in Vancouver. We've created 900 child care spaces since 2008. We're launching an affordable housing agency, the first of its kind in Vancouver.

But this is an area where we're trying to fill a huge federal vacuum. Ottawa was once a major player in affordable

housing, and they've largely relinquished that role, on everything from making it economical to build rental housing to letting CMHC leases expire for affordable co-ops.

People often see affordable housing as a purely social issue, but it isn't. Ensuring affordable housing is crucial to lasting economic success.

And that goes for all three of these areas. They reinforce each other. And each of them goes a long way to determining our quality of life, our economic prosperity, and the health of our environment.

And I have always believed that you can't pursue any of those in isolation. You can see the perils of single-mindedly pursuing prosperity in the state of cities like Beijing, choked with air pollution.

But the choice isn't to be either Beijing or Detroit. We have invented and reinvented remarkable economic and social engines across this country, and I'm confident we can keep setting our sights higher. To build better cities, generating more wealth, offering better places to live and raise a family, while safeguarding our environment for future generations.

To do that—we need a national vision that embraces the modern reality of urban Canada.

And so in the coming weeks and months, as we head into a federal election, Canada's cities will be speaking out.

We'll be calling on our national government to raise its game: to engage in a real partnership with our cities, and to make our success a national priority.

The path to Canada's economic success runs through our cities. And so too does the path for the next majority government.

This election will see several new federal ridings in cities across Canada.

And in those ridings we have thousands of new voters who ride transit, who are searching for affordable housing, who are starting a business and trying to get their goods to market.

The question that many voters will be asking is which federal party will actually reduce my commute time? Who will take action to ensure my kids can afford to live in the city they grew up in?

The federal parties can expect to hear from us—and we'll expect to hear from them.

Because no political party can put forward a credible economic plan without speaking to the needs of Canada's cities.

And no Prime Minister will be able to take power with a majority government later this year without the backing of millions of urban voters across Canada.

Because the conversation about Canada's economic future is increasingly rooted in a conversation about Canada's cities.

I hope you'll join that conversation as well. I hope you'll tell your part of the story of a country with a proud rural tradition, a strong and enduring resource base... and the most innovative, competitive and vibrant cities in the world.

Thank you.

**Mayor Gregor Robertson
to the Urban Land Institute
June 17, 2015
Vancouver, BC
Check against delivery**

It's a pleasure to join you again. Thank you to Jennifer for that warm welcome

I'd like to first start by recognizing members of City Council and our City staff team here today....

And most of all, thank you to the Urban Land Institute for the invitation to speak with you today

The issues that ULI raises are so important during a time when our city and region are facing some big challenges, and some exciting opportunities. And there's no shortage of either of them in Vancouver

First, the opportunities:

Our city is in a position of strength at a time when other governments are stuck in gridlock or uncertainty

Our economy is projected to be the strongest in Canada next year. The Conference Board of Canada says we're bucking the national trend. We're seeing record levels of new office space being built downtown, and securing long-term leases that represent a vote of confidence in the health of our city.

3 of Canada's top tech start-ups potentially valued at \$1 billion or more are in Vancouver: hootsuite, slack, and vision critical

We're leading on the environment as the world turns to Paris and COP21 this December. Climate pollution is dropping in Vancouver, we've set the bold goal of shifting to 100% renewable energy, and now 50% of all trips in Vancouver are done by bike, on foot or by transit - 5 years ahead of schedule

We're embracing the potential for visionary changes to our city, with a decision on the viaducts coming this fall, which could potentially open up public land to connect Chinatown with False Creek

And we're doubling down on a culture of vibrancy, investing in festivals and culture, injecting energy into our street life and showcasing our diversity in neighbourhoods throughout Vancouver

These are opportunities that other cities can only dream of – and not a day goes by I don't recognize how fortunate I am to serve the people of Vancouver at a time like this
But we have our challenges, for sure

Like transportation, where we'll soon hear the results of a plebiscite that I hope will unlock our region's transit future, or could set us backwards. And I want to be clear that one way or another, a Broadway Subway WILL get built - and I want to recognize ULI's leadership in bringing your expertise and insight towards the Broadway Corridor, and making a clear, coherent case for why a Subway makes sense

We've made progress toward our goal of ending street homelessness – we're not there yet, but we're determined as ever to keep helping our most vulnerable

but there's another big challenge for our city, one that cuts to the heart of the kind of community we want to be. And it's the issue I want to talk about today: affordability.

If you look only at the aggregate numbers, our real estate situation is great. Plenty of shovels in the ground, plenty of jobs in construction, the value of people's homes steadily increasing... it all looks rosy.

But you don't have to look too closely to see the cracks – and the biggest one is affordability.

Back when I was a young North Vancouver boy, Kitsilano was still a working-class Greek neighbourhood.

Good luck finding a home in Kits that a working-class family could afford today.

That's the shadow side of our long real estate boom. We're pricing too many people out of living in our city, and creating a generational divide we cannot allow to continue

And when home ownership is the way that the middle class has of building wealth and financial security, I don't have to tell you what that means for income inequality.

Now, this didn't just happen overnight. Affordability in Vancouver has been a challenge for a long time.

And it's easy to mistake a long-standing problem for an intractable one. To say this is just the market at work, for better and for worse.

Well, I don't buy that.

After all, we shape the market forces at work in our cities in countless direct and indirect ways. At City Hall, with zoning, with neighbourhood planning, with our infrastructure choices, and at the senior levels of government, with our spending priorities and allocations, our tax incentives and regulations

A city where only the well-off can afford to live is not the Vancouver we want to build.

So I reject the idea that our lack of affordability is some gravitational constant of the marketplace. It may be a complex, pressing public policy issue, but we're not powerless.

and together, we're taking some bold steps to address it.

If there is one message I want to convey, it is this: City Hall is doing everything we can to get the housing built that meets the needs of our residents – and we will keep pursuing every option or idea to do so.

Put yourself in the shoes of a young professional, a few years out of university, currently renting in a basement suite, but hoping to move closer to downtown. And while she's not expecting an ocean view, she'd love to find a decent place to rent that wasn't built before the second world war.

We're meeting that need. Our Rental 100 program has delivered almost 4,000 new units of rental homes: on Broadway, Cambie, Main Street, on Granville. More than half of all new rental being built in Metro Vancouver is taking place right here, in Vancouver. And at a time when our vacancy rate is just 0.5%, it's absolutely necessary.

Or think about a young family a few years further along. They have two kids, expecting a third, and they need to move out of their condo tower into a bigger house, maybe in a neighbourhood like Douglas Park or Cedar Cottage.

But the amount of money they'd have to come up with to make the leap to a single-family house is a non-starter. And they start to wonder if they have to move to the suburbs or further.

We're meeting that need: we're upping our requirements for family housing, requiring more 3 bedrooms in rezonings, and exploring a Family Housing Rezoning Policy that would deliver more townhouses and duplexes near parks and schools, in single family areas.

We have staff looking at a pilot program for entry-level home ownership, where the City helps drive affordability for first-time buyers who live and work in Vancouver, making below a certain income.

And our new neighbourhood plans for places like Cambie Corridor and Marpole are shifting new development towards townhouses and duplexes. Ground-oriented housing for people who want to move out of their single family home but don't want the tower.

All of these scenarios reflect the ways our housing market challenges different people, people of all ages and incomes, and yet they are linked. Which is why it is important to recognize that it is a mistake to pit one against the other.

There's nothing entitled about wanting to stay in the city you grew up in, no matter how old or how much money you have.

I've only touched on some of the initiatives we've launched. There are many others — from leveraging city land through our Affordable Housing Agency to spur affordable housing developments, to the rent bank that's helping to keep people from losing their homes when they're in danger of missing a payment.

But there is only so much that Vancouver can do on its own. Partnerships are crucial at all levels of government. And supply alone will not solve our affordability challenges.

Now, I know that no big-city mayor has ever uttered the words "The province is giving us everything we need and more."

And I'm not going to be the first. Far from it.

But I want to signal that while we've had a very productive relationship with the provincial government, our housing market has changed – and we need a new conversation that explores the next set of tools to create a fairer, more level playing field in the housing market. One that treats housing as first and foremost for homes, not as an investment commodity.

Let's look at tools to discourage speculation on housing, particularly in pre-sales, which impact first-time buyers.

We're seeing strong rises in land values year over year. When someone sells at the top end of the market, having them pay a bit more in property transfer tax is a fair way to generate funds that could help those who are struggling.

I was pleased to see the Premier say she recognizes the problem of affordability in Metro Vancouver, and that her government is studying options. Baby boomers and many people in my generation had the good fortune to enter the housing market at the beginning of a long, steady climb in housing prices.

All governments now have a responsibility to ensure that the next generation can share in the benefits of our successful economy, and have the opportunity to live and thrive right here in B.C.

The biggest gap we face, though, is with the federal government.

Over the past several years, we've seen Ottawa stepping back further and further from its responsibilities as a partner in housing.

Nation-wide, we've lost 850,000 affordable units in the last decade alone. That's akin to a major city disappearing.

In Vancouver, we're seeing Mr. Harper's government liquidating their holdings in the Jericho lands and the RCMP lands - some of the most desirable real estate in the country.

I think it's short-sighted to take these out of public hands.

Let's not turn these public assets into an enclave for the wealthy. As Mayor, I'm committed to fighting for a mix of housing, with high standards for affordability and for family-friendly homes. Let's raise the bar once more.

This is public land; surely there should be a stronger requirement for public benefit.

As the chair of the big-city mayors' caucus, I've joined my counterparts from across the country to call on Prime Minister Harper to come back to the table – and for the other parties to commit to doing so

This is a national issue. Everything I said about the importance of housing to Vancouver's economy holds true for the nation.

And in an election year, we'll be holding every party and every leader to account, because our cities can't withstand another four years of neglect. The path to a majority government in October runs through our cities.

And so far, I've been pleased that both the NDP's Tom Mulcair and the Liberal's Justin Trudeau have said they intend to run on bold urban agendas – with housing and transit front and centre

And I'm asking all of you today that if you care about your city, if you share the belief that our housing situation requires action from all levels of government, then you need to speak up as we head in to this election

Because the cost of housing isn't a force of nature. It's the result of choices that are made at city halls, in provincial legislatures and on Parliament Hill. It's the result of business decisions and government decisions.

And the choice of whether to act, whether to change those decisions, is in our hands.

Make no mistake, that requires some courage. In Vancouver, when it comes to housing, all of the easy decisions have been made.

Acknowledging that unaffordable housing isn't inevitable, that we can make Vancouver more affordable if we so choose — that means taking responsibility. All of us.

But let's take that responsibility. Because that's the hallmark of a mature, successful city — a city that aspires to global leadership: that we take on big challenges, big ideas and big responsibilities.

And there is no bigger challenge or responsibility that we face in our city than affordable housing

Thank you for the invitation to speak with you today, and I look forward to your questions

**Mayor Gregor Robertson
to the Canada 2020 Conference
November 19, 2015
Ottawa, ON
Check against delivery**

I would like to thank Canada 2020 for the opportunity to join you all here today. It's fantastic to have such an outstanding collection of Cabinet ministers, Members of Parliament, and leaders from business, from the community, and from government all gathered here for an important series of discussions on the future of our country.

Bonjour, je suis heureux d'être parmi vous aujourd'hui et je tiens à remercier Canada 2020 pour cette cordiale invitation.

It's hard to believe that just 31 days ago, we didn't know who was going to win the federal election.

Just 31 days ago, pundits said there was a solid chance of the Harper government being re-elected.

But I like to think that Canada 2020 knew that wasn't going to happen when they scheduled this conference.

To come together today with fellow progressives... on the one-month anniversary of the change Canadians made in our course as a nation... that's a great feeling.

I was certainly ready for the end of that campaign. It's not just that it was long...

It's that it was such an ugly campaign. It was the relentless appeals to fear, to mutual suspicion.

Those appeals were cynical. They were divisive. And they failed.

Even setting aside questions of party, policy and platform — the decision Canadians made on October 19 is a confirmation of our country as open, optimistic and, yes, progressive.

Invited to vote with their worst instincts, Canadians chose instead to vote based on their better angels. Rejecting the politics of fear and division. Upholding hope, and embracing the future.

Now we see announcement after announcement rolling out.

Scientists unmuzzled. A commitment to real action on climate change. Vancouver's Coast Guard Station reopening. Ending the political harassment of registered charities.

Now, none of this is revolutionary.

So it says a lot about the last decade... that just restoring some basic common-sense measures to the federal government... can feel like the Berlin Wall coming down.

For the past year, Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi and I have said that the road to a federal majority runs through our cities.

And when Canadians went to the polls with change in mind, that change came overwhelmingly from our cities.

A quarter century ago, the Reform Party launched the slogan "The West wants in." Well, Canada's cities want in.

For the past decade, Canada's cities were consigned to the back burner — when we were on the stove at all.

Our national government took the view that Canada's true strength and identity was in the hinterlands.

It's a vision where Canada's resource economy would drive a new era of sustained prosperity—with the oilsands leading the pack.

A rising resource tide was going to lift all boats.

But this never quite manifested. And then the price of oil collapsed, and the Canadian economy faltered. And today many Canadian communities and families are hurting.

Don't get me wrong - the rural and resource-based economies have always been very important to Canada, and always will be - particularly if they are aligned with a cleaner, and greener Canadian brand.

Food and agriculture, forestry, mining and fossil fuels are important industries that deserve careful stewardship. They can be long term economic drivers if we don't enable - much less subsidize - the volatility of a gold rush mentality. The good news is that they can all make steady contributions with a truly sustainable approach.

The even better news though is that while nature has very real limits to growth, human ingenuity does not. Our biggest economic opportunity is with innovation, which I'll come back to in a moment.

We are a large, diverse and dynamic nation. And a country like ours thrives on an economy that's just as large, diverse and dynamic.

It's that diverse and innovative economy that lets us compete and win on the global stage. And the wellspring for that diversity and dynamism—the great locus of Canadian innovation—is Canada's cities.

We are an urban country. Our biggest cities, the Census Metropolitan Areas, account for 72% of our GDP. Half of our GDP comes from the six biggest cities.

Cities are where we assemble that critical mass of entrepreneurs, researchers, skilled workers, professionals, community leaders... that whole range of ingenuity, imagination and skill that brings new ideas to life.

And it's no coincidence that many of our big city mayors – such as myself, Mayor Tory or Mayor Savage in Halifax – have a background in business and entrepreneurship. We're drawn to the innovation, the experimentation that takes place in our cities.

The diversity in our economy that I'm talking about starts with people. Canada's cities are five times more culturally and ethnically diverse than the rest of Canada.

We draw people from around the world and across the country. On any given day in Vancouver, I'll talk to hospital workers from the Philippines, or software engineers from China, or a medical researcher from Ireland.

And that diversity plays out economically. Statistics Canada reports a very tight correlation between population size and economic diversity.

And with economic diversity comes stability. We avoid the Detroit phenomenon, because when one sector stalls, another steps forward. You get efficiencies of municipal infrastructure use.

Which brings me back to innovation. Innovation is what's driving job growth and economic success in our cities. And there's cross-pollination of ideas and innovations across industries, urban technologies helping to make rural resource industries cleaner and more profitable.

Thanks to innovation, our cities are alive with activity and are the steady engines driving the Canadian economy. Come to Vancouver, and you'll see impressive booms in clean technology, in creative industries like film, TV and digital media, in ICT and cutting-edge health sciences.

Over the past decade, Vancouver has led the nation in head office growth. Our economy is expected to lead the country in economic growth this year. And in 2016. And every year through 2019.

Which means we're doing a poor job of living up to the stereotype of the laid-back West Coast!

But we're doing a great job of creating jobs. For example, there are now 75,000 tech jobs in Vancouver – with 15,000 more expected in the next three years alone. And most importantly, we're proving it can be done sustainably.

Permit me a humblebrag or two — minus the humble.

Since the mid-2000s, even with double-digit population and job growth, Vancouver's greenhouse gas emissions are down seven per cent. And over the past two decades, cars on our roads are down 20 per cent – and 50% of all trips are now made on foot, on a bike, or on transit.

And as proud as I am of that record, I know we can do more. Which is why Vancouver has committed to 100 per cent reliance on renewable energy by 2050 or sooner.

Secretary of State John Kerry called that an example for cities around the world.

And Vancouver's story isn't unique.

You can find brilliant innovations in Edmonton, in Calgary, in Toronto, in Ottawa, in Montreal, in St. John's, in Halifax.

We've become skilled in Canada at building successful cities, at reinventing and renewing them. Look at any list of the world's most liveable cities, the greenest cities, the cities of innovation, and Canadian cities are at or near the top.

The cities we've built together give Canada a competitive advantage. But the sad fact is, we aren't making the most of it—and we're in danger of seeing it erode badly.

As much as our cities are helping to drive the national economy, there's grit in our gears, and it's getting worse.

Our success stories will get a lot more scarce if people can't move around in our cities. If our infrastructure is allowed to crumble. If families can't afford to live here.

That's why Canada's mayors worked so hard to make the cities agenda an electoral agenda — and why it's so important that we succeeded.

But that success won't mean very much if Ottawa doesn't move swiftly and decisively. Canada's cities have to recover from a lost decade, and that means a lot of time to make up.

And I want to be fair. It's not as if the past government did nothing. Their contributions in areas like infrastructure have been important.

But they were often piecemeal. And they didn't come close to recognizing the urgency of our challenges.

This isn't just about money, important as that is. This is about working together to shape the future of our cities.

Canada's cities have spent the past 10 years on the sidelines. Being told "thanks but no thanks" when it comes to dealing with the greatest challenges facing our country.

Now though, we can build on strong and direct partnerships with the new Cabinet, and could benefit even more if there is a clear point of contact for Cities in the new government or its caucus.

Let me spell out three critical areas where federal partnership with cities can mean the most.

The first is transit.

In every city in Canada, demand has been steadily outstripping capacity for rapid transit. And that's magnified the pressure of a growing population on our roads and highways.

Relieving that pressure would be an economic boon. And it's hard to imagine a more immediate improvement in people's quality of life than reducing the amount of time they spend tense and miserable, stuck in traffic. That's time they could be working... or building their community... or enjoying with family or friends.

So let's settle something right now.

Investing in transit isn't just transportation policy.

Investing in transit isn't just social policy.

Investing in transit is sound, proven, long-term economic strategy.

And it frees up roads and highways for the traffic that can't hop on a bus or subway: like getting goods to market, and making the just-in-time economy feasible.

It does all that while improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions.

There's a backlog of transit improvements needed in cities across the country. In Metro Vancouver, mayors representing 23 local governments developed a 10 year action plan to invest in badly-needed transit and our roads, bridges, SeaBus and active transportation.

But we couldn't get the federal and provincial partnership we needed to put that plan into effect. The only option the province left us was a referendum, to ask local voters for a provincial sales tax increase.

The kind of referendum no road construction or infrastructure in our province has ever had to face.

I'm sorry to say that voters said no to more tax. I was disappointed. But I also understood why. It should never have come to this.

And I have a new sense of hope that it never will again... if the new federal government works with us on a historic partnership to craft a comprehensive, national strategy for transit. And together we compel provinces to be willing partners.

It's essential for the health of our cities. And it's essential to the prosperity of our country.

The second area we have to address is affordability. Now, I am the mayor of what you might call ground zero for Canada's urban affordability crisis. It's partly what brought me into municipal politics.

And my past seven years in office have only confirmed for me what I knew when I first ran for this post.

That a city is only as liveable as it is affordable.

When we start pricing more and more people out of the housing market, we undercut a key element of what makes our cities successful.

Businesses start finding it harder to attract and retain talent.

Startups can't make it through those first few lean years, because their founders have to make huge mortgage payments.

Couples have to leave as soon as they start a family, because they can't afford the space they'll need.

University and college graduates and skilled workers head to the suburbs—or leave the country altogether—taking our investment in their education with them.

And I haven't even begun to address the impact of homelessness on the social fabric of a community. Or the extra money we spend dealing with homelessness with shelters, police, hospitals, courts and jails.

We're doing what we can as a local government to address affordability in Vancouver.

But we're trying to fill a huge federal vacuum. Ottawa has largely relinquished its role in everything from making it economical to build rental housing to letting CMHC leases expire for affordable co-ops.

People often see affordable housing as a purely social issue, but it isn't. Ensuring affordable housing is crucial to lasting economic success.

So I'm encouraged to know the new federal government takes this issue seriously. Their commitment to study the surging housing

markets like Vancouver, and identify the effect of foreign investment, is evidence-based research we desperately need.

I'm especially bullish on their promise to see what federal buildings and lands could be used for affordable housing.

Because finding innovative ways to make the most of city-owned real estate assets — that's a cornerstone of Vancouver's approach to affordability.

There is no one answer to affordability, no silver bullet that will rein in real estate markets and lower rental prices.

What it will take is concerted, relentless and coordinated effort from all three levels of government.

And I'm pleased to welcome the federal government back to the table.

The third crucial area is climate change.

Here's something that tells you how urgently the world has come to see the climate agenda:

Less than three weeks after the tragic, brutal attacks in Paris...

Voici un indicateur du sentiment mondial d'urgence quant au changement climatique :

Moins de trois semaines après les attaques tragiques et brutales sur Paris...

...world leaders are still going to gather there to try to reach an agreement on concerted global action.

For the first time in many years, I expect that our country won't be standing in the way of meaningful progress — but urging that progress forward.

For the first time in many years, our country won't be a lobby from one industrial sector — but a voice for all Canadians.

It's a welcome change, it's in the finest Canadian tradition of globalism, and it's about damn time.

I fervently hope the discussions in Paris are fruitful. I'm grateful to have the chance to be there to do what I can.

But whatever agreement emerges, it's going to require the full partnership of Canada's cities to turn words on paper in change on the ground — and in the air.

Because whether it's transportation, low-carbon industry, energy efficiency, waste reduction, or renewable energy, cities will be the linchpin in reducing carbon emissions — and in dealing with the impacts from the climate changes that already taking a huge toll.

Beyond just confronting climate change though, we must also stand ready as Canadians to capitalize upon the immense economic opportunity presented by the shift to renewable energy, green infrastructure, and clean technology.

With our pace of green jobs growth far exceeding the rest of our sectors, and with Vancouver's economy set to lead the nation for the next five years, Vancouver is demonstrating more clearly than ever before that green leadership is essential for reliable economic growth in the 21st century.

On all of these fronts, and at this important moment in our history, Canada's cities are ready to step up. And if I can leave you with one overriding message, it's this:

Don't think for a moment that the fight is won, that the hard work is over, or that it's time to demobilize.

The worldview that aimed to silence cities and mute progressive voices: it's still alive and well and very well-funded.

The greatest mistake progressive forces can make is seeing electoral change as the culmination of our work, because it isn't. It's the beginning.

We could have the most enlightened government possible in Ottawa. And we would still need to pursue relentless, active two-ended politics:

Clearing the path ahead of the federal government.
And continuing to push from behind.

The very best news is that I know we're ready to do that. I see the appetite for change, for progress, for meaningful action every day in my city.

And I want to give you an example of that.

Last September, as the Syrian refugee crisis was reaching the breaking point, our city began working with the federal government to open our doors.

We held a public forum with only 48 hours notice... and filled a hall with a capacity of 500 people to overflowing.

And the offers of assistance, the demand for new and more effective ways to help, they just keep growing. Which is why the Mayors of Canada's big cities stand ready and willing to assist the federal government in meeting its goal of settling 25000 Syrian refugees by years end.

I know that cities will step up to meet this challenge and every other one. And not because of any one politician. Not because of any mayor or councillor.

I know cities will step up — because our people step up, time and time again.

My friends and neighbours. Your friends and neighbours. The sense of what we have in common, what we owe each other, and what we can accomplish together.

Mes amis et voisins. Vos amis et voisins. Le sentiment de ce que nous avons en commun, ce que nous nous devons les uns les autres, et ce que nous pouvons accomplir ensemble.

Whatever you call that spirit — community, solidarity or even love — that's what makes cities work. It's what makes Canada strong. And if we embrace it, it will change the world.

Thank you. Merci.