

**ANNUAL ADDRESS
BY MAYOR MALCOLM BRODIE
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Richmond City Council's last term (2011-2014) saw the City achieve many milestones. We marked new beginnings, bade farewell to old friends and realized some long-held aspirations.

As we draw the curtain on the past term, we owe a large debt of gratitude to Councillors Evelina Halsey-Brandt and Linda Barnes, both of whom played major public roles for many years. Both were passionate advocates for our community on social issues, the arts, community safety and public facilities. Each provided steady leadership while they were tirelessly dedicated to realizing the best for Richmond residents. Their contributions will be missed and we thank them for their steadfast commitment.

We also enthusiastically welcome new members of Council, Carol Day and Alexa Loo. Their expertise, experience and backgrounds certainly bring new energy to Council as we continue to make Richmond the best place in which to live, work and visit. Both were elected after a campaign that resulted in a significant increase in the number of votes cast for a very large group of candidates. For the first time, the upcoming Council term will be four years.

Unfortunately, 2014 also marked the loss of some community icons who will be greatly missed.

We were all saddened by the passing of Ted Lorenz. Many knew Ted as a former Fire Chief, who helped lead the transformation of Richmond Fire-Rescue from a volunteer force into the modern professional service it is today. Yet, he was perhaps best loved for his contributions to the Steveston community. Ted and his wife, Frances, were among the driving forces behind the Steveston Community Society and the Steveston Salmon Festival, among others.

Eric Gilfillan, another long-time City employee and senior manager, also passed away this year. Over his 36-years with the City, Eric gained the respect of his fellow workers and senior management. Ultimately, as Director of Operations in Public Works, Eric had a unique insight into City Operations.

A few weeks ago, we also mourned the passing of Norman Wigglesworth, one of our City's most colourful characters and a veteran who honourably served his country in time of war. Norman was best known as a passionate anti-smoking crusader whose efforts led Richmond to the forefront in restricting public smoking. All will miss *Stormin' Norman's* passion and flare.

Overall, the past Council term saw incredible civic progress as the City moved forward with plans for the coming decades. An updated Official Community Plan, Social Development Strategy, Sustainability Framework, Parks and Open Space Strategy, Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan, Hamilton Area Plan and Dike Master Plan are only a few of the

important strategies that were approved or updated last term. Each promises to ensure that Richmond remains one of Canada's most livable communities for future generations.

Council's actions and the work of staff have been guided by 13 Council Term Goals each with specific objectives. Tonight I propose to focus on five of them to illustrate our direction as a City and a community:

- Facility Development;
- Community Safety;
- Managing Growth and Development;
- Financial Management; and
- Sustainability.

Facility Development

Goal # 4: To ensure provision of quality public facilities and amenities in Richmond that keep pace with the rate of growth, through implementation of an updated comprehensive Facility Development Plan that includes an analysis of existing facilities, the identification of required new facilities, and the recommended timing, financial strategies and public process for implementing the plan.

Facility development needs to keep pace with our rate of growth. This is far more than just constructing a few new buildings. We engage with our community to prioritize various needs, determine appropriate timing and identify sound financial strategies within our means.

Last term, we undertook an ambitious capital program to expand and upgrade our civic facilities, infrastructure and public amenities. Our capital budget for 2014 alone was \$185 million.

The first phase of our Major Facilities Capital Plan is now underway with a critically-needed multi-purpose complex within Minoru Park. It will house an expanded aquatic centre and older adult centre in addition to sports and recreational program space.

Demographically, our population is aging rapidly. Hence, the importance of expanded services and space to meet those changing needs. Richmond's aquatic centres are among the City's most popular recreational facilities. The Minoru Aquatic Centre, opened as the Centennial Pool in 1958, lacks many features now expected.

After extensive public engagement, Council approved the floor plan and preliminary design for the new complex. Program space for older adults will be doubled, while the expanded aquatic centre will offer a wide range of pools and other amenities to meet a myriad of recreational needs. Facility construction is expected to complete in 2017. Council is also relocating and upgrading a number of the playing fields within Minoru Park.

Another key element of the overall plan is completion in 2015 of the new City Centre Community Centre to accommodate the recreational needs of existing and future residents. This Centre

has been a long-held dream for many, particularly our partners at the City Centre Community Association, the joint managers.

We also opened two outstanding new recreational amenities: the Railway Greenway and the Terra Nova Adventure Play Experience.

Following the historic route of the Inter-Urban tram, the Railway Greenway is a 5-kilometre trail that runs through the middle of the island. It connects the Middle Arm to the South Arm at Britannia Shipyards.

Based on a natural play theme, the innovative Terra Nova Adventure Play Experience incorporates an array of features and was designed, in part, from the input of children who are now using it with enthusiastic delight. The Play Experience has added new vibrancy to our award-winning Terra Nova Rural Park, while respecting the park's themes of honouring nature and heritage.

We also completed restoration of two important heritage buildings: the Terra Nova Cannery Store and the Edwardian Cottage. In partnership with Thompson Community Association, the Cottage is now the site of an extremely popular nature pre-school.

Next summer will see the opening of the new Richmond Olympic Experience at the Olympic Oval. A celebration of the Games, as well as the history of sport in Richmond, this venue will be a highly interactive, multi-media experience to delight all ages. A short promotional video has been developed to showcase this new venture.

Following extensive community consultation, a major initiative has been development of the Garden City Legacy Landscape Plan. The vision for these Lands is in part:

... an exceptional open space legacy for both residents and visitors ... an impressive gateway ... and a place of transition ... from the rural to the urban. Their rich, diverse and integrated natural and agricultural landscape provides a dynamic setting for learning and exploration ... with a range of spaces, amenities and uses to encourage healthy lifestyles, social interaction and a strong sense of shared community pride.

In implementing the Plan and protecting the sensitive ecology, we will soon develop a system of trails to allow our residents to enjoy this tremendous natural asset.

As these initiatives are only the start, we are now developing a priority list of potential capital projects for analysis and consultation. So, stay tuned as we move forward.

Community Safety

Goal # 1: To ensure Richmond remains a safe and desirable community to live, work and play in, through the delivery of effective public safety services that are targeted to the City's specific needs and priorities.

Who would want to live or work in a City that is not very safe? Years ago, Council recognized the need for our first responders to be housed in more appropriate facilities to carry out their duties. In reality, the fire halls and RCMP building were functionally inadequate as none were post-disaster rated. This rendered them possibly unusable after a major earthquake.

To address this issue, City Council launched a comprehensive program to replace and upgrade these buildings. Since 2002, we have built new fire halls in Hamilton, Sea Island and Steveston, as we also undertook a major retro-fit on a fourth. We then acquired and renovated for the RCMP the security headquarters for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

The final steps in this plan are the new Brighthouse and Cambie fire halls. Site preparation is underway for construction to begin soon. The Cambie Fire Hall will be the first joint fire hall/ambulance station in a major urban setting in the Province.

At project completion, Richmond will have a complete set of modern, post-disaster rated public safety buildings, equipped to meet our community needs for decades to come.

Managing Growth and Development

Goal # 7: To ensure effective growth management for the City, including the adequate provision of facility, service and amenity requirements associated with growth.

Civic growth fosters both opportunity and challenge. It spurs the economy by creating jobs and expanding our tax base. It supports new infrastructure, public amenities and programs, although it also creates pressure on existing services.

Richmond has been a leader in creating partnerships with the development community to ensure that growth provides real benefits for all. For instance, through City acquisitions as well as development agreements, we have already secured hundreds of acres for future parks including some along the Middle Arm and in the City Centre.

At the same time, key community social needs have also been addressed. In the past two years, new child care facilities were opened in the West Cambie and Hamilton neighbourhoods. Agreements are in place to provide four additional child care facilities over the next few years as part of new developments. Combined, these projects represent more than 300 new child care spaces for Richmond families.

City, developer and partner contributions provided significant funding for the new Kiwanis Towers on Minoru Boulevard. This will result in 296 affordable seniors housing units being opened in 2015. The new Storeys project on Granville Avenue will also provide 129 affordable units for adults at risk. These are all in addition to hundreds of new affordable housing units secured across the City through new development.

Through an innovative partnership with TransLink and local developers, new development will fund construction of the long-envisioned Capstan Station on the Canada Line. We can also

foresee additional transportation improvements, especially important additions to the City Centre Ring Road Network.

The City is also working with the development community on the award-winning district energy programs in the West Cambie and City Centre areas. This latest technology is being used to cost-effectively provide heating and cooling to hundreds of residences and commercial units, thus decreasing our reliance on fossil fuels.

As long planned, new growth will be concentrated primarily in our City Centre, supported by rapid transit and other key amenities. This fulfills local and regional objectives for controlled, sustainable growth, while protecting our existing single family neighbourhoods, farmland and industrial lands.

Financial Management

Goal # 5: To develop and implement effective and innovative financial policies and strategies that help the City to successfully manage the challenges of tough economic times, while taking advantage of financial opportunities, and balance current and long term financial needs.

To plan and build for our future, the City needs to be financially sustainable. This term goal was developed to ensure we can successfully manage our challenges notwithstanding difficult economic circumstances. We always want to take advantage of financial opportunities with a balanced approach to current and long-term financial needs.

In order for property taxes to remain among the lowest in the region, Richmond has actively pursued funding from external sources. Well over \$5 million in partner and sponsorship funding has been secured since 2011, with additional large grant applications in process. By building our financial reserves and leveraging alternative revenue sources, the City has funded capital construction of many of its major projects over the past decade with little impact on property taxes.

For the first time in 20-years, City Council undertook significant external borrowing of approximately \$50 million at affordable interest rates to help fund construction of the projects in the first phase of the Major Facilities Capital Plan. With previous responsible practices, Richmond moved forward on projects worth over \$120 million without unduly compromising reserve balances or causing a tax increase. Richmond still maintains one of the lowest debt per capita ratios in the region.

This strong financial position was achieved through Council's adherence to its Long Term Financial Management Strategy, in place for over a decade. This approach ensures the City continues to provide an enviable level of service to our community, while putting aside the monies necessary to sustain that standard into the future.

Sustainability

Goal # 8: To demonstrate leadership in sustainability through continued implementation of the City's Sustainability Framework.

Fundamental to City Council's approach is our commitment to sustainability. Richmond's Official Community Plan articulates our vision which reads in part:

... A healthy island City that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs ...

As embodied in a broad Sustainability Framework, some of the achievements from the past term include:

- Implementation of our innovative Social Development Strategy including updates of our Youth and Older Adult service plans;
- Adoption of the Hamilton Area Plan to enable that community to grow from 5,000 to 12,000 residents by 2041. The Plan contemplates a revitalized shopping area, new library space, police office, park, child care hub and more community spaces over time;
- Approval of the Resilient Economy Strategy, designed to attract and retain jobs and business. Our outreach campaign over the last two years facilitated the addition of approximately 2,000 jobs;
- Continued development of our volunteer program, where recorded volunteer hours increased by 16% in 2014, with more than 57,000 hours completed by 8,425 volunteers;
- Ongoing success of the Richmond Sport Hosting program – it helped secure more than 35 sport events over the past two years. Sport hosting generated more than 44,000 hotel room nights in 2012 and 2013 while generating an estimated \$4.5 million in annual economic spinoffs;
- Endorsement of Phase 1 of the Dike Master Plan which gives long-term guidance for dike development, flood protection and sea level rise as a result of global warming;
- Achievement of carbon neutrality in 2013 following adoption of the strategic 25-year Community Energy and Emission Plan meant to achieve greenhouse gas reduction targets;

- Adoption of an updated Sustainable High Performance Building Policy for the City's corporate facilities;
- Expansion last May of the Blue Box and Blue Cart recycling programs to include a broader range of materials through partnership with Multi-Material BC (MMBC);
- Launch of the Bath Slough Revitalization Initiative in East Richmond, focusing on enhancement of one of the City's few remaining natural watercourses;
- To reduce use of private vehicles, we explored opportunities for car sharing, continued expansion of the cycling network combined with new pedestrian signal and cycling-walking improvements;
- Approval of the River Green District Energy Utility, which will ultimately provide renewable energy for heating and hot water for millions of square feet of space; and
- Implementation of the second phase of the Alexandra District Energy Utility (ADEU) to augment over 800 units now connected to the system.

All these projects demonstrate how City Council is building a sustainable and vibrant Richmond.

Awards and Recognition

As Richmond City Council strives to enhance the quality and quantity of our services, one measure of our success is through peer recognition. In the last year alone, Richmond has received numerous regional, national and international awards for excellence. They include:

1. For Richmond's Alexandra District Energy Utility (ADEU) project:
 - National Energy Globe Award for Canada;
 - Canadian Geo-exchange Coalition Excellence Award;
 - Community Planning and Development Award; and
 - Sustainability Award.
2. The international Waterfront Award of Excellence recognizing our Middle Arm Park and Greenway;
3. The Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA) Professional Development Award for our corporate leadership development program;
4. The inaugural Culture Days National Marketing Award for promotion of the annual nation-wide event;
5. For our planning in our City Centre, an Honourable Mention in the FCM Sustainable Communities Awards for Neighbourhood Development;

6. A Wood WORKS! BC Community Recognition Award for the City's commitment to promoting the use of wood in civic projects;
7. *Western Investor* magazine selected Richmond as the best city for real estate investment in Western Canada;
8. Silver Leaf (National) and Bronze Quill (Provincial) Awards of Excellence for the communications campaign developed in support of the Green Cart program launch;
9. A Distinguished Systems award for innovation related to the City's GIS tool;
10. Honourable Mention in the *Site Selection* magazine in the annual ranking of local and regional economic development programs;
11. A Leadership Excellence Award from BC Hydro for achievements in energy efficiency;
12. A Most Business Friendly Award from NAIOP Vancouver recognizing our green building initiatives; and
13. Two awards were received from the Government Finance Officers Association for the 2012 Annual Report:
 - Canadian Award for Financial Reporting – received for the 11th consecutive year; and
 - Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting – for a 4th consecutive year.

Conclusion

As you can tell, it has been another rewarding term for Richmond and your City Council. With new faces on Council, we will continue to provide Richmond residents with strong governance and leadership.

Richmond City Council faces many challenges in continuing to provide a safe, affordable, diverse, sustainable and prosperous community. In the weeks to come, City Council will map out the priorities for the upcoming term. We are dedicated to sustaining the high quality of living and economic opportunity which has historically been Richmond's hallmark. As embodied in our plans, we will continue to respect civic heritage, the arts and our culture, notwithstanding carefully-planned growth.

All of this is achievable through the leadership of City Council, supported by staff, our community, engaged volunteers and so many others who work diligently to make Richmond a better place. Thanks to each of you for your continuing involvement.