

**Mayor Eddie Francis
Inaugural Address
December 4, 2006
City of Windsor**

Thank you, Gordon.

City councillors, members of our municipal staff, family and friends...

Let us give thanks that we live in a democracy. In a city and country where we often forget that free elections are remarkable and wonderful achievements. And for this, we must salute the brave veterans of the past, and the men and women in uniform today, who continue to safeguard these freedoms.

Par le privilège du vote, nous rendons hommage aux sacrifices de nos vétérans, ainsi qu'aux hommes et femmes dans nos forces armées.

Nous avons hérité d'un grand patrimoine. Ce patrimoine, c'est la ville de Windsor.

La responsabilité de faire de Windsor une ville meilleure est la nôtre – il s'agit d'augmenter la qualité de vie de nos enfants et petits-enfants.

Today, we build from a position of strength. That strength was not created over the past three years, but over the past one hundred years.

In my office at city hall, there are old black-and-white pictures of Windsorites from our archives.

These pictures are windows into the past. They capture – frozen in time – people who helped make our city what it is today.

I look at the people in those pictures. Their activities and clothing are of a different era.

But their faces provide testimony that our ancestors' values, challenges, and dreams, are the same as the ones that we share today.

One picture shows an autoworker – assembling one of the early Fords. You can see his craftsmanship, and the care he puts into his work. It's the same dedication to doing the job right that people in our manufacturing industry bring to work every day.

There is a scene of people at the market – eagerly buying and selling and bartering with one another. In an era when times were tough, they still wore their best clothes in public. They held their heads high. And maintained pride in themselves, and in their community.

There is a picture of railway workers who had finished work for the day – all in their three-piece suits. You can see how proud they were of their work, and of what their efforts meant to our City. They seemed to know that they weren't just laying railway tracks – but they were building connections to the rest of the world.

When you see the faces of the people in these pictures, you learn all you really need to know about Windsor. The pride. The grit. The determination. The belief in our community, and in ourselves, that has seen us through good times, and bad.

For me, those pictures serve as a daily reminder. A reminder, of those who came before us. The people – whose hard work and vision built our city.

Our forbearers knew – doing the right thing is not always popular. Making difficult decisions is not easy. Staying focused on the long-term best interest of our city, takes unshakeable determination guided by spirited resolve.

Over the next four years, our council will be faced with many difficult decisions.

When faced with those decisions, let us resolve to do the right thing.

To stay focused on our goals, while having open minds to fresh ideas and important opportunities. Let us have the wisdom, to ensure that the decisions we are making are in the long-term best interests of our city, and our region.

Tonight, I have the privilege of addressing you as your Mayor. Thank you for giving me the honour of your confidence.

Holding the office of Mayor is a responsibility that I take seriously. The mandate you gave to me was humbling. And I consider that mandate a challenge to work even harder, and do even more. Because I am a reflection of you – the great people of the City of Windsor.

My daily challenge and goal, is to make you proud. I will strive without fail, to be worthy of your trust.

On this stage, sit a group of men and women who are equally committed to our city.

I look forward to close collaboration, to great ideas, to vigorous debate and intelligent solutions at City Council.

Debate and differences of perspective are hallmarks of effective City Councils, and essential for a strong democracy. It is my hope that this Council will ask challenging questions and engage in thoughtful discussions over the next four years.

We will have our differences of opinion. And nothing could be more helpful in establishing smarter, more effective policies and directions for our City.

But we must always remember our duty to the citizens of our City. We must always choose constructive dialogue and sound solutions, over negativity and dissent.

In our municipal tradition, there is no government side. There is no opposition side. There is one Council, with the tremendous responsibility of leading this enterprise called Windsor.

What unites our Council, is so much stronger than those areas where we may have our differences.

We are united by our desire for a higher quality of life and standard of living.

More and better jobs.

Strong, and safe neighbourhoods.

And an attractive and sustainable environment – with beautiful parks and public spaces.

These are the things we will build, as a strong united team.

These are the things we believe in!

Join me in congratulating our city councillors.

Dave Brister.

Drew Dilkens.

Jo-Anne Gignac.

Alan Halberstadt.

Percy Hatfield.

Ron Jones.

Ken Lewenza.

Bill Marra.

Caroline Postma.

And Fluvio Valentinis.

Colleagues - let us remember this night. Let us remember this spirit of cooperation, as we serve the people of our city over the next four years.

Three years ago, this was a different city than it is today.

Some have said, that the past three years were among the most ambitious and filled with accomplishments that our city had seen in a long, long time.

The result, is that we are building from a position of new-found strength.

Together, we have rebuilt our city's foundation ... our reputation ... and our pride.

But tonight ... tonight is about the future.

It's about our plans moving forward.

And about our commitment and resolve to deliver results... positive results.

Tonight, I want to speak with you about an overall framework. It is the beginning of a plan that our City Council will build together over the next few weeks – a plan to make Windsor the most liveable city in Canada.

Our city must be thriving. A modern place – where our streets are alive with energy and activity. A place with a culture of enterprise – where people take initiative, roll up their sleeves, and seize opportunities.

A place whose strong economy and well-paying jobs create a high standard of living. A place of prosperity – with families earning good money, and young people choosing to stay in Windsor or return here for high-paying, skilled jobs.

It will be well-run – with municipal government doing a great job of those things it needs to be doing – but not interfering in things that it shouldn't.

It will be a place with a strong sense of character. Of identity. Where each neighbourhood is unique, but unified by the drive, entrepreneurship and determination of the people who live there.

It will be a place that promotes and celebrates the arts and culture.

It will be a diverse place – that benefits from its rich diversity of people.

It will be a safe place – with one of the most respected and modern police services in the country.

It will have a sustainable and clean environment. It will be a place where our parks and trails will be full of people walking and riding and roller-blading – enjoying our great quality of life.

A strong economy. Strong municipal government. Strong communities. Clean environment.

A proud place – that is as attractive to newcomers as it is to the people who live here. A place with a strong identity, sense of purpose, and energetic culture.

That's the city we want to build! That's what we're going to achieve!

You might think we are unique in our vision of a stronger, more prosperous, more liveable city.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Other cities want what we want. They, too, are working to attract jobs and investment.

They're also building plans to improve their quality of life and standard of living.

They will be doing many of the same things that we're doing.

So the next four years, will be about us setting ourselves apart.

And what separates us from others, is the distinctiveness of our local character. Our identity.

Our local character and identity and ambition, are the things that define us. They give us an edge. These are the things that make us different.

Our grit, our pride, our determination, and our ability to survive and thrive are central to who we are.

These make us different.

These things give us a competitive advantage.

But ultimately, our success requires the right plan.

And to make our city more liveable, we need to have a strong economy, strong city government, a healthy environment, and strong communities.

The first part of our plan, is building a strong economy.

We live in an increasingly-competitive global economy. An economy where jobs, investment capital, and talented people can move across the globe with alarming speed.

Global competition is very real, and from the perspective of the corporation of the city of Windsor, largely beyond our control.

Yet, the opportunities and impacts of today's global economy impact our standard of living and our quality of life – for better or for worse.

Our traditional economic base has been in manufacturing. And as the Canadian dollar has risen, and governments have entered into unfair, one-sided trade agreements, Canada's economy has lost a large number of manufacturing jobs.

We have not been immune from those job losses in our community.

We all have family members or friends, who have felt the harsh sting of job loss.

I heard an analogy recently that describes our situation well.

Olive trees have long been considered symbols of place and community.

When olive trees are grown in green houses – unexposed to the natural elements, they grow into weak trees, with little or no character or distinguishing features. And they don't survive well, when exposed to the external environment.

Olive trees that are grown outdoors, are exposed to harsh temperatures. Strong winds. And stormy weather.

They develop their own unique look and character. They build strength and endurance.

Windsor is like one of those outdoor olive trees.

We have had our fair share of stormy weather!

That's what makes us strong. That's what has given us our character. And like those rugged olive trees, we have the ability to adjust and thrive as times change.

Today's global economy means that places like Windsor must continuously move to higher parts of the value chain.

That means building upon our traditional strengths in highly-skilled manufacturing – where we can be considered world leaders.

It also means doing even more knowledge-based, highly-skilled, innovative work. Being creative.

Maintaining and growing the skills of our workforce.

And it means doing work that others can't do, because they don't have the knowledge, the skills, or the drive to do it.

There are some municipalities that, frankly, need to reinvent themselves in the context of the new global economy. We're fortunate, because we're not in that position.

We have the basics right. A skilled workforce. Modern infrastructure. Economic stability. And a solid research and development base.

In fact, Windsor ranks 16th in Canada when it comes to overall research and development, and 9th in private sector research and development.

What we do need to do, is create the right conditions for prosperity and economic growth.

That's where our municipality can play a role.

First, we need to get the basics right.

Our municipality's role is to lower taxes, reduce debt, provide land for large employers, and doing things like ensuring adequate water and power supplies for large manufacturers.

That's what we do, and that's what investors expect from municipalities.

Second, we need to work as a region.

To thrive in today's global economy, we cannot think that we are in competition with our neighbouring municipalities – because we are not.

We are part of an economic region, and we simply must think of ourselves in that context, and act as one region.

We are already making progress in this regard.

Our regional economic development board is currently hiring a CEO.

We've formed the South Western Ontario Economic Assembly – bringing together the economic interests of all of south western Ontario.

And we've been working hard to build links with our neighbours across the border.

We are building a regional economic powerhouse – one that sees the world as its market, and knows it can compete successfully on a global scale.

We've had a lot of talk throughout our County about ways to work together for our mutual benefit.

But the time for talk is over. It is now time to act.

We are not interested in competition ... but cooperation.

We are not interested in amalgamation ... but collaboration.

We have so many opportunities.

So we must not let our fears from the past, become barriers to progress in the future.

And we must begin.

Here's just one example of why.

Today, you can catch a bus in Windsor to travel all the way to the Palace of Auburn Hills on one ticket.

But you can't catch a bus to the Colasanti's.

There was a time when we had a regional approach to planning ... and a regional road authority.

We need a regional approach to infrastructure and planning once again.

This will allow us to build more intelligently, and to leverage what we already have – like our airport.

Our airport is one of the most under-utilized assets that we have. It is a strategic regional asset – with potentially tremendous benefit to everyone in Essex County and beyond.

Let's use it more, and unleash its value by doing more with the airport itself, and the lands that surround it.

We are a large, modern region – with the needs and opportunities of a large, modern region.

No individual city, no individual town can do it alone.

The City of Windsor is a willing partner – that will do its fair share when it comes to regional collaboration.

We extend the hand of partnership – but insist that our relationships must be built on trust, and the shared, mutual belief in the importance and value of a strong City, a strong County, and a stronger region.

Thirdly, we need to diversify our economy.

Part of our regional strategy, is ensuring economic diversification.

The most important ingredient for success in the new economy is knowledge-based workers. Skilled people, who have the training and tools to innovate.

And we are very fortunate here in Windsor, to have two incubators of skilled people right in our city: St. Clair College, and the University of Windsor.

Already, great things have happened between the college, university and the automotive sector when it comes to R&D and skills training.

But we can – and must – do more.

Our University is such an important asset – one that many communities would love to have. And the time has come for the University of Windsor to achieve more, and to do more, when it comes to achieving excellence.

While Windsor stood 9th in private sector R&D investment, we ranked 20th in public sector research and development.

The University of Windsor has so much opportunity and potential. The time has come for it to join the ranks of the truly great universities in this province and in this country.

This, too, is largely beyond our City Council's control.

Through my office, I will be seeking more formalized arrangements linking our municipality, academic institutions, and business. This will allow us to be better prepared, and more proactive, as we work together to improve our quality of life as we meet the demands of today's knowledge-based economy.

Reports and surveys have shown that a critically-important factor in attracting the knowledge-based jobs and workers we need, is to have a thriving arts and cultural community.

We have such a strong arts and culture foundation.

That's why I'm challenging the arts and culture groups in our city to work together, and build an integrated, strategic plan that will allow the arts to thrive in Windsor.

Fourthly, we need to tell our story.

Windsor and our region have so much to offer. But we cannot assume that people will stumble across us by chance.

We have to be proactive. We must actively and aggressively promote our advantages, and sell the tremendous benefits and quality of life of our region.

That's why it is time for us to get serious about marketing Windsor, and marketing our region.

That's why I will be asking City Council, County Council, our University and College, the hospitals, Chamber of Commerce – everybody – to come together.

To come together, and commit the significant funds required, to the development and implementation of a comprehensive marketing strategy that will showcase Windsor to investors and decision-makers around the globe.

Successful marketing requires critical mass – you can't do it with small budgets. It requires a consistent message – you need to repeat the same thing time and time again.

So we need to bring groups together. We need to bring our entire region together. And develop a bold, exciting, and modern marketing campaign that tells the world about what a great place this is to live, work, visit, and invest.

We need to do this right, through an organized, deliberate campaign. It will be expensive, but by marketing ourselves properly, we can – and we will – achieve results.

Making Windsor the most liveable city in Canada means doing all we can to build a strong economy.

It also means providing strong municipal government.

And in today's context, strong municipal government means having a balanced fiscal plan.

In the 1990's, we had the Fiscal Fitness plan.

In 2000, it was pay-as-you-go.

In 2003, we had our debt reduction plan.

Now, we need a balanced fiscal plan.

I will ask Council to consider such a plan, that fully funds major projects, allows flexibility through unallocated funds, decreases debt, and increases reserves.

This plan, if approved by Council, will provide us with a robust financial plan for the next five years.

Reducing our debt is smart business. Less debt means that we're paying less money on interest.

And I suspect that most of us, would rather spend our tax dollars on things like new arenas and parks and our police service, instead of losing that money to banks through interest charges.

That's why I'm proposing to reduce our debt to \$127.8 million dollars by the end of 2012.

This represents a further 20% reduction in our municipal debt, on top of the progress that we've already made.

Our balanced fiscal plan will still allow us to fully fund major projects, such as our new arena, 400 City Hall Square, Huron Lodge, Brighton Beach, and modern radio infrastructure for our essential services.

If Council chooses to support this plan, we would also have the opportunity to retire the remaining Canderel Building debt of \$20.6 million – a full ten years ahead of schedule.

There is no greater gift we can leave our children and grandchildren, than a city that is financially strong.

Taken together, these measures will cut our interest payments in half – from \$6.4 million, to roughly \$3.2 million.

This plan will also provide an additional \$30.2 million for important strategic initiatives – over and above the \$50 million we invest annually on important capital projects like roads, sewers and related infrastructure.

This plan will reduce our debt – and it will also increase our cash reserves.

This is important, because higher cash reserves will help us to improve our bond rating.

That bond rating directly impacts our cost of borrowing – the interest rate we pay, as a municipality, on our debt. It is also an important economic investment tool.

Standard & Poor recently gave us a great report card – revising its outlook on the City of Windsor from stable to positive.

However, in their report, they were concerned about our cash reserves, and urged us to increase them.

The size of our reserve fund is an indicator of a city's financial strength.

And it also provides us with the security to deal with emergencies. It's our savings account. And our savings account is lower than most of our peer municipalities.

Today, our debt-to-reserve ratio is 2.55.

That means we have 2.55 times more debt, than we have in our Savings Account.

Today, Windsor has \$74.1 million in reserves. We need \$140 million.

That's why our balanced fiscal plan proposes to increase Windsor's reserve fund to \$112 million by 2012.

We will tackle our debt. We will increase our reserves.

And – we need to manage our tax rates.

Competitive taxes will help us to keep and attract the kinds of businesses and employers that we need – while also helping to leave more of your money in your pockets.

Every time a spending initiative comes before our city council, I urge my fellow city councillors to ask a simple question:

Is our taxpayers' money better spent on this initiative, or would it be better to keep that money in the pockets of the people of this city – to spend or save as they see fit?

Strong municipal government is also about communicating with the people of our city.

Modern communications technology has opened so many new means of communication, and the time has come for us to embrace them.

We need to change the way we communicate with our residents.

It is my hope that during our strategic sessions in the coming weeks, that Council will provide a new framework for how we communicate with our residents.

This could include publishing an annual report that will help people measure us based on our performance. It would help you hold us accountable.

Until then, my plan is to start an e-newsletter, from the Mayor to the people of Windsor.

It is the fireside chat of the twenty-first century.

And it will provide you with a direct update from me, on the progress we are making and the key issues facing our city.

I've spoken with you this evening about achieving stronger economic growth. And I've spoken to you about stronger municipal government.

A third part of our plan to make Windsor the most liveable city in Canada, is to build strong communities within our city.

That means turning our attention to our neighbourhoods.

I love downtown Windsor, and it has come so far, so fast.

It will continue to be a focus of our City Council.

But we are only as strong as our neighborhoods.

This is a city united by our strong character, and made stronger through the diversity and richness of our neighbourhoods.

And the time has come, for City Council to hear from our neighbourhoods directly.

That's why I am proposing that we begin a new process, to develop Neighbourhood Action Plans.

Just like we did with our people-based budget, this process will seek input through neighbourhood workshops and planning sessions.

Each neighbourhood in Windsor is distinct. They have different needs.

This process will allow people to tell their city about their local priorities.

That might be graffiti.

Abandoned homes.

Attracting new business or cleaner streets.

Your priorities will be reflected through Neighbourhood Action Plans.

And our budget process will provide the resources needed to bring each community's plan to life.

Margaret Mead once said, "Never underestimate the ability of a small group of thoughtful people to change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Our local residents have heard that call.

Just look at the example of the Little River Acres Group. These committed neighbours have transformed the old Village of Riverside, and created the new Little River acres. This was not led by government. It was a community-in-action, that mobilized and delivered.

We have more examples of local initiative, and community identity.

The Sandwich Development task force is changing the face of Sandwich, and providing it with a new spirit.

And the Glengarry Neighbourhood Strengthening Committee, which has taken on the Glengarry neighbourhood and improved the living conditions in one of our most troubled neighbourhoods. They have eliminated 75 % of the problems. That's great progress.

Neighbours building their neighbourhoods. Taking ownership of problems, and taking pride in the solutions.

We want to help accelerate this kind of action.

Let's harness the energy of our neighbourhoods. Let's brand our neighbourhoods – the way that other great cities have done to create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts here in Windsor.

Strong communities mean safe and secure communities.

Building those communities means never letting crime become a significant problem in our city.

Last summer, we lost a hero in the line of duty.

The day John Atkinson died was my worst day as Mayor. A day that I will forever remember.

It changed me. It changed the Chief. It changed the men and women of our Police Service and our entire community. It changed our City.

Then, last August, a crack cocaine addict forced his way into a home. He then shot a man – and that man's mother, as she was trying to protect her son.

This is not our Windsor. It is not our home. It's not the Windsor we're building.

What did both of these tragic incidents have in common? They were both related to drugs, and both related to illegal firearms.

Repeated police investigations have found a direct link between drugs, gangs and firearms in many crimes being committed in our city.

Our police service – and others – have also recognized the increasing sophistication of criminals, and of organized crime.

Rapid advances in technology and telecommunications have changed the nature of crimes, and how they are policed.

Today, we hear of cyber-stalking. Cyber-bullying. And these crimes are particularly targeted at our most vulnerable citizens – children and seniors.

Our police service recently arrested men caught trying to lure a thirteen year-old girl. One of the men was from the United States.

These atrocious acts sicken me to this day. I am so glad we caught them this time, and glad the 13-year old was, in fact, a police officer, and not your daughter, granddaughter, niece, or friend.

The drug culture has also changed – creating new and different difficulties for police.

Marijuana grow-ops are popping up in the most unexpected of places – including our neighbourhoods.

We are also seeing the proliferation of new dangerous drugs – like meth and ice.

Meth poses a threat to all of us – not just the drug user – because of the paranoia it can induce.

And let's be clear. Drug trafficking is done by organized crime and dangerous gangs.

Gangs with guns.

So let's draw the connection. Drug trafficking is getting more sophisticated and organized.

That's because it is run by gangs and others.

And those gangs will not hesitate to use illegal firearms.

That's why we had incidents like the gang-related shooting down town just last month.

The person responsible was a member of a street gang from Toronto.

We are not waiting for more violence. We are not going to turn a blind eye and pray that it goes away. We are taking action.

We're addressing the root causes of crime. Tackling crime before it becomes a big problem.

For the first time in nearly forty years, a comprehensive efficiency and effectiveness review of our police service was recently completed, under the leadership of Chief Glen Stannard, his executive team, and the police services board.

The result will be an unprecedented change and modernization of the Windsor police service.

This modernization will include:

- A comprehensive reorganization of the police service, including the creation of a Major Crime Squad and other new units to effectively meet the challenges presented by crime trends and technological advances;
- An investment in new tools and technologies that will allow us to fight crime using the most modern means available;

- Twenty more uniformed police officers on the beat;
- And there will be two patrol cars watching over the streets of each of our municipal wards, twenty-four hours a day.

We will not tolerate violent crime and gang activity in our city.

Key goals of the Windsor Police Service will be to target gangs in our community, crack down on those who carry and use guns, and seek out those who sell or use illicit drugs.

Our goal will not simply be to displace these gangs and guns – but to eradicate them.

I am confident in the leadership of Chief Glenn Stannard and his Executive Management Team in their ability to make Windsor safer. The Chief has always delivered for our city, and he has my complete confidence.

I would like to thank the Chief, and every man and woman in uniform for their commitment, and for their service in making our communities and City safe.

The fourth and final pillar of our plan to make Windsor Canada's most liveable city, is to create a cleaner environment.

Recently, we adopted and passed Windsor's first Environmental Master Plan.

This plan brings together all of the ongoing environmentally related programs from across the City, and suggests a number of new initiatives to make our City greener and cleaner.

The report is based on an extensive consultation, which included a City-wide Environmental survey, comments received at public forums, and a series of action planning sessions.

It is our guiding environmental document for the next five years.

We want to lead by example with respect to environmental action.

The Plan's strategic direction is based on the following statement:

The City of Windsor is committed to being a leader through its daily actions and services to enhance the environment for present and future generations.

I will ask council that we make the implementation of our Environmental Master Plan a priority.

Our plan starts with taking action to clean up brownfields.

We can make use of Federation of Canadian Municipalities green funds in order to turn eyesores into useable lands and parks.

I want to expand Windsor's greenway system.

We will continue with the planting of one million trees.

We will also move ahead with our Rails to Trails initiative.

Under this plan, we can convert old, under-utilized rail lines into more productive uses, including hiking and biking trails, green spaces, and commercial development.

We can do more – and we must. Why not insist that every new development has a green plan? Or for those that do, they get fast-track approval?

Why not move more of our municipal fleet to hybrid-vehicles?

Why not do more to increase the use of public transit – which is an area in which we have already made great progress with our friends in Michigan?

Let me speak with you about another environmental issue, economic issue, and quality of life issue about which I feel passionately.

And that is our border crossing.

In Windsor, we know and accept the responsibility of being host to the world's most economically important border crossing.

And we need the provincial and federal government to share our resolve.

Our resolve to get a new border crossing done soon ... and done right.

Windsor's bottom line has remained the same throughout this process. In fact we are the only level of government that has been consistent on this issue.

While we are proud to host the world's most important border crossing, we will not let others force the wrong approach upon us.

An approach that will make our problems worse tomorrow than they are today.

Ours is a city that has learned the hard way from the mistakes of the past. They stopped the 401 where they did, and we've been paying the price ever since.

We cannot allow the same mistakes to be made again.

Now, there are those who will claim that I am obstructionist. That I have been preventing them from just getting it done.

Let me be clear about where I stand.

If pushing for a better quality of life for our residents so they don't have to see, smell, feel, or inhale fumes from the trucks makes me obstructionist ...

If standing up for our residents and giving them a voice makes me difficult ...

If asking for a real solution that gets trucks off of city streets and out of neighbourhoods makes me a nuisance ...

If defending the interest of our city means asking others to pause and consider other, better, more environmentally-friendly options ...

Then ... I am guilty as charged.

There is no reason why the new border solution cannot enhance our city, improve our environment, and make Windsor an even greater city!

And that is what I – and this new Council – intend for it to do!

Tonight, your City Council pledged to serve. We promised to do our very best, to make our city stronger.

To defend the interests of the people of Windsor.

And to achieve a vision of a better tomorrow for our city.

We will not get sidetracked by problems of the past or present. We will remain sharply focused on building for the future.

I know we can do it. I believe in this city. I believe in all of you.

I believe in a Windsor that is economically robust, and that thinks and acts regionally.

A Windsor that is fiscally responsible, and socially inclusive.

I believe in a Windsor with a clean and healthy environment ... made up of diverse industries and strong neighbourhoods.

I believe in a Windsor that is authentic.

That celebrates the arts and culture.

I believe in a Windsor that leverages its diversity, and that is friendly and welcoming to people of all ages, creeds, and backgrounds.

I believe in a Windsor where our standard of living is high, and where our satisfaction with our daily lives is unparalleled.

I believe in a proud Windsor – one with a strong sense of character and unique identity. These are strengths – and ones we should celebrate.

I believe in our spirit. In our passion. In who we are, and where we've come from.

But all of us need to believe.

All of us need to do our part.

The writer Charles Swindoll once said, and I quote:

“The single most significant decision I make on a day to day basis is my choice of attitude.

It is more important than my past, my education, my bankroll, my successes or failures, fame or pain, what other people think of me or say about me, my circumstances, or my position.

Attitude keeps me going, or prevents my progress. It alone fuels my fire or assaults my hope.

When my attitude is right, there is no barrier too high, no valley too deep, no dream too extreme, no challenge too great for me.”

Friends, ours is a vision of a great city – a prosperous, vital place that future generations will be proud to call home.

Let's embrace this new spirit. Believing in ourselves ... in each other ... and in our city.

Let's remember who we are. Let's remember the people in those old black and white pictures – our ancestors, who helped make our city what it is today.

Let our ancestors be our guide, and the future generations inspire us, as we make our city great.

Let's get to work.

Merci beaucoup – thank you very much!