

**Mayor Eddie Francis  
State of the City Address  
May 14, 2007  
Chrysler Theatre  
St. Clair Centre for the Arts  
Windsor, Ontario**

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Thank you, Gordon.

This is the fourth time that I have had the privilege to address you as your Mayor on the State of our City.

We have made great progress together.

Building a stronger, more financially stable, more adaptable city.

And you have come to know me as an individual who tells it as it is. Always telling you what we are going to do, and then setting out to get it done.

I have never been one to try to sugar-coat things.

And today will be no different.

I'm going to be open, straightforward, and honest.

It is my responsibility to do so.

Economically, it has been a hard year for many people in our city, and in our region.

Every day – I get letters. I get emails. I get messages from people who have lost their jobs. Whose families are struggling to get by.

I've heard from a mother, worried about her son. From a father, concerned about how he will pay for new clothes for his children. From older workers who have been laid off – desperately seeking new jobs requiring a different set of skills.

I just wish there was something that I could do to make it all better – right away.

But I am not in the Boardroom of DCX, or Ford or GM.

I am not at the Cabinet table of the federal government, able to introduce a manufacturing policy.

There isn't a morning when I wake up ... or a night when I go to sleep ... when these people aren't on my mind.

But I know this.

Everything that I have done as Mayor ...

Has been designed to ensure we have the right foundation in place to create jobs, and improve our standard of living.

We've reduced our municipal debt ... because investors and job creators don't want to locate in places that are weighed down by high debts and excessive interest costs.

We've worked to improve our quality of place... because today's knowledge economy workers and job creators want to live in places that are clean, that offer amenities.

We're investing in roads and sewers ... because modern, high-quality infrastructure is a key factor that investors look for when deciding where to locate.

We're investing in our police service to keep our communities safe ... because crime statistics are something investors look at as well.

Of course, we have to make choices. And not everything can be of equal priority. But the question that I always ask when determining if we should support an initiative is, will it help to improve our foundation – so that we can attract more jobs and investment, more doctors, more families, and create a better quality of life?

At City Hall, we saw the economic challenges associated with our heavy reliance on manufacturing coming.

We've been planning ahead – re-tooling for the new economy.

Helping to secure the new Casino expansion and convention centre.

Working to attract new employers like Navistar and Global Sutherland.

And, thinking strategically – implementing a plan to ensure the stability and prosperity of our city long after any of us have left public office.

Retooling our economy cannot be accomplished over night. It will take time. It will take patience. And, it will take discipline.

But let me be clear: the foundation we are building is going to help our economy to transform.

We must protect our existing manufacturing sector, as we diversify our economic base.

And embrace the knowledge economy of the future that will provide good, high-skilled, high paying jobs.

In preparing for this State of the City address, I sought inspiration from our past.

And I was reminded of the importance of diversifying our economy.

Economies naturally go through good times and bad times – there is nothing we can do about that.

But when our economy is focused heavily in one area – like Windsor’s economy is reliant upon manufacturing – the hard times experienced by everyone else - are harder on us.

I looked back at some of the 1992 newspaper headlines.

Here’s what they said:

Lean, mean mentality takes toll.

Plant closure list keeps on growing.

Malls hit hard by store closures.

Windsor bankruptcies setting near-record pace.

The problems impacting our manufacturing sector today, are not new. They do not come as a surprise. And they are not unique to Windsor.

This time – we are undergoing a fundamental transformation. And the solution isn’t as simple as one new vehicle, or one casino coming into our city.

However, we’re fortunate. Windsor starts from a stronger position than some others. We have resources that make other people and places envious.

Think about all of the incredible things we have going for us. We have the assets that are essential for success in today’s new economy.

We have a great location. A University. An art gallery.

A community college with a new urban campus.

Great restaurants. Major corporate headquarters - Jameison, GreenShield and Chrysler.

A magnificent waterfront.

A symphony orchestra.

Strong neighbourhoods with history and character.

A beautiful view of a major urban city, Detroit, Michigan.

A city with whom we share so much, and a city that is home to some of the best sports franchises, greatest attractions and the greatest people in the world.

The Spirit of Detroit is itself experiencing a new renaissance.

Windsor, has a vibrant and attractive downtown. A world-class casino – CEASARS Windsor - the world's most recognized and premier name in gaming.

A growing immigrant population.

And importantly - a municipal strategic plan – focused on the long-term.

My remarks to you today, are about our economy. Straight talk about where we need to go as a city.

And, about City Council's strategy to help ensure Windsor's long-term economic stability, diversity, and prosperity.

First, we're fixing the basics. Planning for tomorrow by reducing our debt, renewing our water and sewer infrastructure, helping our police services to get the job done.

Second, we're thinking long-term – investing for tomorrow. Securing our strategic transportation infrastructure. Focusing on engineering – to create highly-skilled graduates and commercial spin-offs that will mean jobs and prosperity.

And third, we're promoting Windsor. Changing the perception of our city among outsiders, and encouraging all Windsorites to do as much for our city, as she has done for us.

To build a strong economy, we need to ensure we are getting the basics right as a municipality.

Over the past three and a half years, we've been working hard to put Windsor on a sound financial footing.

And I am pleased to report that our plan is working.

Other cities' debts are skyrocketing. Other cities are borrowing money to pay for roads and sewers.

Others are using their reserves to pay for their day-to-day operations, and for the salaries of their staff. That's not sustainable financial planning. It's not prudent business.

But for a long time we were doing the same thing.

Back when our city fell into this trap, it just increased our debt – saddling us with the interest costs we're still paying off today.

It was the 'lets-worry-about-it-later' approach.

Today, Windsor has a prudent pay-as-you-go approach to spending. We have an aggressive debt reduction plan. We're taking a balanced approach.

Paying down our debt, investing in roads and sewers, increasing our cash reserves, and maintaining the lowest possible tax rates.

All while delivering the quality service that you have come to expect and deserve.

Before our debt reduction plan was approved by city council, our municipal debt was to have grown to \$245 million by 2011.

Thanks to our debt reduction plan, Windsor's municipal debt is projected to be only \$155.7 million by 2011.

It will then further be reduced to \$128 million by 2012.

Our new approach to paying for things as we go, has not only allowed us to pay down our debt, but invest in large projects at the same time. This has required us to focus on reducing waste, and managing every single dollar intelligently.

Let's look at it another way.

If we stick with our current approach, and assuming all things being equal through to the end of our Council's term in office, we will have avoided needing to borrow \$370.5 million dollars. No new mortgage.

We will have paid for \$370.5 million dollars of new construction – including roads, sewers, Huron Lodge, a police training centre, our new arena and other large projects with cash .

All of these projects completed and paid for without new debt.

That means we avoid losing money to interest payments. That's having a major impact already. This year, we're saving over \$5.6 million per year that would otherwise have been lost to interest costs.

Prudent, intelligent financial management. This is what investors look for. They know, that every dollar they invest in the city, will be a dollar wisely managed.

This is exciting progress, and it is very good news for the future of our city.

Our city council has taken a new and different approach, when it comes to setting priorities.

We asked the people of Windsor about their priorities. And we were told to focus on the basics – renew our roads and sewers.

We listened. And we're taking action.

This year seventy-one percent of our city's capital budget is dedicated to roads and sewers.

For the first time ever, we developed a five-year capital plan that is fully balanced to funding sources.

What does that mean in real terms?

No more guessing when your projects, in your neighbourhoods, will be done.

No more putting off the projects that matter most to you.

We have laid out a clear, concise capital plan. It not only identifies each project scheduled to be done - but tells you where, when, and why.

No more guessing. No more waiting.

And we have the money to pay for it.

We're investing more – to ensure we have the quality roads and sewers that Windsor needs and deserves.

In 2001, our capital budget was \$48.5 million dollars.

Today, our capital budget is \$74.8 million dollars – an increase of 54 percent

And we are paying for this with cash.

It used to be that the city would dip into its reserves and go into debt in order to fund new capital investments for things like water mains, roads, and sewer construction.

In 2001, 38 percent of our capital spending was paid for out of our city's reserve funds. It was like using our RRSP savings to pay for a new deck in the back yard. But it gets worse. Forty-seven percent of capital spending in 2001 was funded using debt. Nearly half of our capital spending went on our credit card – which costs us interest.

No more.

We are no longer using debt or savings to pay for new capital investments.

At the same time, we've added more money into our savings account. This year's municipal budget increases our reserves by \$34.7 million dollars.

What we've been able to achieve, is remarkable. Other cities are still using debt to fund their capital projects. They will wind up paying more tomorrow, for the spending they're doing today.

Keeping taxes low ... paying down debt ... increasing our reserves ... investing in our infrastructure and delivering quality and reliable services.

Building our City.

Part of the reason we're able to do all this, is because we're keeping a sharp and balanced focus on the cost and efficiency of operating the City of Windsor.

Today, our city is efficient, and it operates well.

However, this has been a difficult budget year for the City. Reduced revenues and increased costs have significantly impacted the city's bottom line.

This is the first time in years that we have eliminated a number of positions among the City's staff complement. A number of these positions were vacant. However, some people have been affected ... and the reassignments have shifted some employees from one position to another.

I want to thank everyone for their help and assistance in making these important changes. Our employees have continued providing quality service, even under stressful times and difficult circumstances.

At this point, it would be easy to sit back and say our job is done.

But that wouldn't improve our city, the value it provides to taxpayers, or the quality of job opportunities we provide to our staff.

So today, we are announcing that the Corporation of the City of Windsor, and its agencies, will undergo a full and comprehensive service delivery review.

We will undertake a process that will uncover new and better approaches to the way we deliver city services.

This service delivery review will be designed to meet customer expectations efficiently and effectively. It will consider the resources we have available, and it will involve employees in the decision-making process. This will be an employee, management, and Council driven exercise.

It will result in things like streamlining operations. Reducing overlap and duplication. And getting out of areas that may be better managed by someone else.

With the cooperation of our staff – from whom the best new ideas will no doubt come – this review will help us deliver great services to the people of Windsor, and keep our taxes low.

There are those who will say that our new approach won't work. That you just can't change entrenched bureaucracies.

I expect it, but don't accept it.

That's because we've already seen tremendous success here in Windsor, with a service delivery review within our municipal organizations.

For the past four years, we have been working extremely hard, undertaking a similar review at our Enwin Group of Companies, and the Windsor Utilities Commission.

Enwin had strayed into areas it should never have been involved with in the first place. It simply didn't have the resources necessary to manage all of those non-core activities.

The staff at Enwin was distracted away from their core business – delivering hydro and water services to our customers.

The premise is simple: Think of our customer.

What they want. What they expect.

Think of our core business.

And with our available resources, deliver the best quality service at the best value.

With employees and management working with the Board, Enwin underwent a massive transformation.

The results:

Enwin sold its hot water heater rental business, and terminated its unprofitable billing contracts.

The Windsor Utilities Commission sold its Water Training Center. Closed its water lab.

New managers and leaders came on board.

The Boards of Directors were streamlined.

We changed and reduced the number of companies, by merging utilities and power lines.

Many of Enwin's business processes had either not kept up with the times, or had been neglected.

We began mapping 50 processes to implement best practices.

The Windsor Utilities Commission installed 311 software to integrate with Enwin work orders, replacing an antiquated, manual system.

It was 2004, and we were still using paper and pencil to keep track of our work orders.

You wonder why we were late or missed an appointment?

With the new system in place, we discovered that there were one thousand water meters that were hooked up to water consuming customers, but the Windsor Utilities Commission didn't know, and wasn't charging them.

And, of course, the customers never called in to tell us that they were getting free water.

Do you think we had a problem?

We are now charging and they are now paying.

Since 2004, and as a result of the service delivery review, we have reduced Enwin's debt by \$20 million dollars...

Reduced its payables by \$5 million dollars...

And paid you – the shareholders of the City of Windsor – a \$3 million dollar dividend this year.

Enwin has spent over \$30 million dollars on capital investments since 2004, and WUC recently announced a \$600 million dollar, 30-year program to replace our old and ailing water infrastructure.

Investing in our poles and our pipes. This will mean we have reliable energy, and reliable water supply.

And that attracts investors and new jobs.

We're doing all of this – all of this – and our distribution rates continue to be at the midpoint for Ontario communities for residential consumers, and lower than average for industry.

Good business, smart process.

This is what a service delivery review is all about.

We can achieve the same results at City Hall.

Think about the communications function.

Today, we have independent communications functions in Social Services, Building, Planning, Transit Windsor, Public Works, Parks and Rec, Windsor Police, Enwin, Windsor Public Library, City Clerk's, and the Fire Department.

All of them undertake independent initiatives. That means we don't have a coordinated message, and common approach to communicating our city's identity or resources.

Imagine bringing them all together under one communication umbrella. Don't you think that by focusing and streamlining their activities, we will be able to deliver a better service, at a lower cost?

Or consider the opportunity to create savings and efficiencies in the management of our water and sewer systems.

Currently, water and wastewater operate as separate administrative divisions. Imagine the enhanced service and administrative savings if we brought them together.

Rethinking the way we do business and how we deliver your services. Bold – but necessary.

Let me speak with you about our police service – of which I am so very, very proud.

To build a stronger economy, we need to maintain safe communities.

Last November, I announced a comprehensive renewal of our police services – helping our police to do more to keep drugs and guns off our streets.

By this fall, we will have doubled the size of the Windsor police service’s Drugs, Intelligence, Guns and Surveillance Unit.

The new focus on fighting drugs and getting guns off our streets is already having an impact.

In the past three months alone, our police have tracked down and taken seven illegal hand guns off of our city streets.

And they are undertaking more investigations than ever before.

The success of our police services isn’t reflected in what you do hear about.

But in what you don’t hear about.

Things like the cocaine, marijuana, oxycodone, and crack busts they’ve made.

Or safely arresting a suspect – who was loitering in the lobby of an apartment building.

When the police approached this suspect in the apartment lobby, he had a shirt over his hand and would not comply with the demands to show his hands to the officers.

The situation became volatile, but the officers acted quickly – without incident. The suspect had concealed a fully loaded semi-automatic handgun under his shirt.

As it turned out, the suspect had a long, violent criminal history dating back into the late 1970’s. He had 50 criminal convictions, including trafficking of narcotics and 11 convictions for armed robbery.

In another case – our police arrested two men from a Toronto street gang, who had cocaine and a loaded handgun in their vehicle, during a routine traffic stop on Huron Church.

This is but a small sample of what our police services have been doing to get the job done – quietly, efficiently, and successfully.

The new resources we’ve provided to our police, and the new approach they are taking, is achieving results – and our city council will continue to support them.

We're putting our financial house in order.

We're making long overdue investments in our water and sewer systems.

We're providing our police services with the support they need to do their jobs.

And – we're promoting the economic benefits of our city.

We've hired a new CEO for the Windsor-Essex County Development Commission – Matthew Fischer. Together with his new team and his active board, he is already bringing fresh thinking, great connections, and partnership opportunities to businesses and people in our region.

Our world is changing. What had been a manufacturing-based economy is evolving into a knowledge-based economy.

Windsor-Essex is in transition.

In the past five years, our economy expanded – with the creation of 15,400 new jobs.

Most of these are in the health care, education, and accommodation and food sectors.

Even as some manufacturing jobs were being lost, new jobs were being created within different parts of Windsor's economy.

Other places have not been so fortunate.

In Sarnia, Dow Chemical is closing in 2008 – eliminating 300 jobs. Kodak is eliminating 3,000 more jobs, many of them in Rochester, as they adjust to digital photography.

In Germany, Volkswagen is eliminating 3,500 positions.

In London, McCormick's confections is closing its plant, at a cost of 300 jobs. TD Canada Trust is also pulling an office out of London at a cost of another 300 jobs.

In Mexico, manufacturing plants are now closing because production is being moved off-shore to China. Who would have thought the day would come that the Mexicans would join us in our worries about outsourcing.

That's how fast the world is changing.

In some parts of Canada – places that aren't as diversified as Windsor – the impact of a single plant closure can be nothing short of a catastrophe.

The closure of a Maple Leaf food processing plant in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia will massively impact that region.

And entire towns in Quebec are being devastated by forestry industry closures.

Other communities are also facing tough times. Communities that are less well prepared than Windsor, to undergo the economic transition required to thrive and prosper.

Our location, and our natural opportunities position us to be a nexus of transportation. This is an exciting competitive advantage for our city.

Many great cities have been transportation hubs.

New York City was a port gateway connecting the United States to Europe.

Istanbul in Turkey flourished as a port connecting Europe with Asia.

More recently, places like Atlanta, Georgia and Dallas, Texas have grown their economies as airline and air traffic hubs.

A key component of our strategy, is securing our critical transportation infrastructure.

Our airport and our tunnel allow people and goods to flow through Windsor and across our border. They are critical to our prosperity.

By securing these assets, and having full control over them, we can take action to protect our market position, to drive our future direction, and to leverage our transportation assets for growth.

That's why our City Council has embarked upon key strategic infrastructure investments that will pay dividends five, ten, and fifty years from now.

Transportation infrastructure may not be very exciting. But it matters.

Just this morning, the Conference Board of Canada released its report on Sustainable Urban Transportation entitled, 'A Winning Strategy for Canada'. In it they conclude that "among the core elements that make cities successful, efficient urban transportation networks are pivotal to business investment and growth as well as environmental sustainability."

We know this.

That is why our municipality has taken control of our airport and its surrounding lands. This will allow us to make the most of our airport when it comes to attracting jobs and diversifying our economy.

We're seeking an operator for the airport. We want the new operator to develop clearly laid out marketing approaches and concrete plans to increase aviation and business activity through our airport.

As one expert put it recently, transportation infrastructure has shaped business locations and commercial development throughout history.

In centuries past, it was seaports that mattered most. Then, river and canal development created great, new cities.

Then railways mattered most. Saskatoon exists largely because it was where the railway stop was located.

Then highways drew economic activity. Think of all the automotive suppliers who are located in cities and towns that are on or near Highway 401.

And the next strategic means of transportation that will matter most ... is air travel.

Air logistics and the new economy are interwoven.

Between 2005 and 2020, the value of world-wide commercial air traffic will increase from \$3.9 billion to \$8.2 billion.

And world air cargo will triple – such that 40 percent of world trade will go by air.

We must make the most of our airport and its surrounding lands – further entrenching Windsor as a link for people, goods, and services.

Across the river, our friends in the Detroit Metro region have embraced the concept of an “aerotropolis” – recognizing that in this new century, airport hubs are critical to the economic success of cities – just as ports, railways, and highways were in the past.

This is the right idea – and we need to integrate our transportation infrastructure with other hubs along the NAFTA trade route, to build even stronger and more effective transportation links.

Today, we host the busiest commercial land bridge in the world.

Our airport has the potential to become an AIR BRIDGE. It could link us to markets around the world, leveraging our city's strategic location, and tapping into cargo and passenger traffic growth.

The second transportation asset that we are seeking to secure is the tunnel.

We are negotiating with City of Detroit to acquire the operating rights of the US side of the tunnel for the next 75 years.

The Detroit-Windsor Tunnel has provided a strategic link between our two downtowns for well over 75 years. That connection has been vital to Detroit and to Windsor and to the residents of our region on both sides of the border, our tourism and our security.

That's why we have seized this opportunity – for the benefit of our economy today, and future generations.

And I want to recognize Mayor Kilpatrick and thank him for his leadership and continued partnership. Our teams are working around the clock, and they are expected to meet the June deadline.

By securing our airport and the tunnel, we are ensuring that Windsor's interests are protected, and that we continue to grow as a North American transportation hub.

We are also making progress – albeit slow progress – on achieving the right solutions to our border crossing.

The greatest and fastest impact on business growth is improvement in border infrastructure.

The recent federal budget made commitments of funding and expertise to help get the job done. And I want to recognize and thank Finance Minister Jim Flaherty for committing the dollars required to get the job done.

We are continuing to work with the DRIC on a new border crossing solution – but our bottom line remains the same.

We will not compromise the long-term best interest of our city in the name of a cheap or intrusive solution.

Our citizens deserve a better quality of life, a healthier environment and a solution that gets trucks off of city streets and out of our neighbourhoods. Our children, our community, our city, our region, our future cannot afford anything less.

That's been our position, and it remains our position.

Manufacturing is our economic base – and we're fortunate to have it.

We need to protect what we have, and continue moving into high-end, innovative manufacturing opportunities.

We have known for some time, that as a result of a rapidly changing global economy, our region would bear a disproportionate number of manufacturing job losses.

Competitive pressures in manufacturing and research and development are drawing the attention of think tanks and public policy makers on both sides of the border.

The Brookings Institute – in partnership with ABC news – is developing independent policy options that they will present to the next President of the United States.

Here is what they say.

China's transition from manufacturing labour-intensive, low-end consumer goods like kitchen utensils or toys, to manufacturing more sophisticated, higher-end products – like office machinery and telecommunications equipment poses a real threat.

China is no longer focused on just making things

They also want to design and engineer things.

They want to become the manufacturing and the intellectual capital of the world.

They want what we have and they are prepared to take it.

The Chinese are focused ...they are strategic, and they are busy manufacturing one of the most critical success factors in today's knowledge economy: engineering graduates.

These smart, young, well-educated Chinese engineers are undertaking high-end research and development.

Recently, Intel announced its first integrated wafer manufacturing facility in Asia.

Intel's President and CEO said:

“We wanted to support a transition from Manufactured in China, to Innovated in China.”

The bottom line is, that Asia is not only a threat to North American and European manufacturing, but also to the research and development facilities in North America and Europe that provide higher wage jobs, and support our standard of living.

For our economies to prepare and to stay ahead, the Brookings Institute and ABC News offer very specific advice.

They recommend building integrated regional economies, with strong incubators of talent and innovation.

To be competitive over the long-term, they recommend investing in colleges and universities. Research institutes. And things that attract talented people to those colleges, universities and research institutes by providing a high quality of life.

We have the raw ingredients for success in today's new economy – right here in Windsor, and in our economic region.

Just think about what's already happening here in Windsor and region.

The Great Lakes region has one of the highest concentrations of research and development activity in the world – much of it in the automotive industry.

Three hundred Fortune 1,000 companies have corporate headquarters and/or research and development centres in the Great Lakes basin.

In Windsor, when it comes to high-end, world-class research and development work, there's the Automotive Research and Development Centre.

It is a state-of-the-art facility that studies steering column durability. Conducts road test simulations. Undertakes corrosion research. And, has the largest lighting tunnel in the world.

It is doing highly-advanced automotive paint and coatings research.

There's Auto 21.

Supporting over 230 top researchers. Undertaking superb work to improve the global competitiveness of the Canadian automotive industry.

There's Tessonics. A Windsor-based company using ultra-sonic imaging to support not just the automotive industry, but aerospace as well.

There's the Ford Centre of Manufacturing excellence at St. Clair College.

All this research and innovation...

All this activity that is precisely what a regional economy needs to grow and thrive in today's economy...

Is already happening right here...in Windsor.

We are already in the centre of a hotbed of R&D activity.

We have already begun what the policy advisors from the Brookings Institute are recommending to the next President.

But we must do more. And that's why a new engineering campus is so important. Our future depends on our ability to innovate ... to cultivate talent and to invest in research and development.

When we hear corporate leaders say: “the most valuable assets we have walk into the elevator, out the door, and go home each night.”

Engineering matters. The training of engineers is a central ingredient of success, in today’s knowledge economy. All one needs to do, is look at the investments that China and India have been making in training and developing engineering students.

The numbers are staggering.

In Canada – we have a great head start over the foreign competition.

But we must build upon it.

Recently, our City and the University of Windsor have come together with our Provincial government to talk about investing in our future.

Together, we are working to build the new, state-of-the-art Centre for Engineering Innovation .

Talks are preliminary, but the City of Windsor is prepared to play a role, if, and only if, the campus is built downtown.

The University of Windsor wants to attract more world-class engineering professors and students.

Top quality professors want first-class facilities and equipment. But they also want more than that. They want to work and live in a place that permits a high standard of living and good quality of life.

Downtown Windsor does exactly that.

A new engineering campus would be a catalyst for the new construction of condos and restaurants and shops. It would further the revitalization of our downtown, and of our entire city.

Imagine the benefits that will come to Windsor’s economy, through the development of a new, world-class engineering school.

Top-notch professors and graduate students.

Highly-skilled knowledge workers trained at our new engineering campus.

Commercialization of new ideas and innovations.

A crop of new small- and medium-sized businesses.

Keeping intellectual property here at home. Creating opportunities for centres of excellence, innovation, technology, environment and energy, biotechnology and engineering.

Fuelling entrepreneurship.

Building new high-end enterprises.

Growing our economy.

All this – adding up to good jobs and prosperity for our community, for our city, our region, and for our Province.

Our city has been good to us.

She has provided us a home, a safe and familiar place to start and raise our families.

She has provided us with means and opportunities to put food on the table.

To educate our children. To live, work and play.

She has brought us together. Weaving a community and social fabric as diverse and unique as her character.

She has provided us with comfort and solace during our saddest and most difficult times.

And she has rejoiced with us in all of our celebrations.

She is home to our most cherished memories.

She is the one to lift us up when we have fallen. Who extends the hand of friendship, when we are down.

And right now – right now she needs us. Every single one of us.

It is our turn to pay her back. To lift her up. To carry her, and keep her strong.

You and me.

All of us owe it to Windsor.

From the City Council to County Council...

From the Union Hall to the Chamber of Commerce...

From our newspapers, radio, and television media...

Community groups. Multicultural organizations.

Businesses.

Schools.

Leaders.

Citizens.

All of us....

All of us need to focus on doing right for the one thing we all share. The thing that creates a common bond among us.

Our CITY. Our REGION.

And what is in her best interest.

We need to focus on her legacy, her success, her reputation, her future.

We need to put narrow interests aside – and promote the greater good.

We need to think about the long-term, and not get distracted by arguing with one another over small, petty and personal issues in the short term.

We need to end the fragmentation – where narrow interests compete with one another within Windsor.

We need to recognize and sideline the special interests that seek to divide us.

And we need to stop distorting our Windsor in the name of advancing other agendas – political or otherwise.

We need to unite in the cause of promoting the benefits of our city and our region to one another ... and to the world.

We need to tell our story.

But before we do ... we need to accept responsibility.

And realize that every action, every word, every report, every headline, or news story...

Every conversation...

Everything we say or do...

Impacts our city's reputation – for better or for worse.

It starts with us. Each and every one of us.

We are all Chief Public Relations Officers of the City of Windsor.

Negative messages travel at the same speed as a text message or information on the internet.

Negative news lands on the desks of corporations and investors all over the world – hand delivered by our competition- leaving a distorted perception about our City in the minds of important decision makers.

It leads many people outside our city to believe things about Windsor that are simply not true.

Many people inside our city believe things about Windsor that are simply not true.

For example – some believe we have militant labour unions in our city. That turns them off.

Regardless as to whether this perception is real or not, it is something we need to address.

As I speak to you this evening, Economic Development and Trade Minister Sandra Pupatello has been leading an effort to attract a very exciting new employer to our region.

The Minister and I have had to counter some of the negative perceptions that are being used against us, as she attempts to attract more jobs and more investment to our city.

I am concerned.

The labour movement has done much for the economic, cultural, and charitable good of Windsor.

I know that our locals are modern, sophisticated, and smart.

Our locals know that they need to market themselves – and to be seen as selling a service that companies want. Demonstrating their value to their members, and to the companies with whom they work.

Our locals are modern and sophisticated – rejecting the old fashioned labour-versus-management way of thinking. They know it’s our manufacturing plants and our jobs in Windsor, versus their manufacturing plants and their jobs elsewhere.

The CAW has proven that over and over again.

Agreements in Oshawa for more flexible work rules were the key to bringing the Camaro there.

Union leadership convinced workers at the DCX plant in Brampton to accept ‘non transfers’. That was the key to the plant winning \$700 million dollars in new investment.

The efforts of the CAW here in Windsor to establish a three-shift operation at the Minivan plant helped create the first three- shift operation on record in the auto sector.

The numerous quality awards achieved at Ford and GM and DCX.

And most recently, unions showed leadership again to bring a new generation of minivans to Windsor.

Our locals serve a purpose. And as these examples prove, they play a critical role in providing job security and flexibility to save corporations money and make them more efficient.

But we need to do more. Together.

We are being watched very closely by investors. In particular, the one I mentioned earlier.

That’s why I am calling upon our labour movement to show Windsorites, and to show the world, that we are modern and sophisticated. That we have moved on.

That we share a common interest that balances job security and corporate success.

That the perception held by some, that we still have militant, old-fashioned unions, simply isn’t supported by the facts.

And that our words and our actions from this day forward will not give our competition the fuel that they need to spread these distorted perceptions.

If you want jobs and job security...

If you want new businesses and employers, and the high standard of living that comes from them ...

If you want an even better quality of life right here in Windsor...

Then all of us have to do our part.

As Thomas Paine once said: “Lead, follow or get out of the way”.

Don’t tell us what we are doing wrong, without telling us how we can make it better.

Don’t tell us the problem, without finding the alternative or coming up with a real solution.

When we believe in ourselves, and when we tell our story, people take notice.

The Financial Times of London agrees. We told them our story, and they proclaimed that Windsor is the number one small city for business investment in all of North America.

Let’s not leave it only to the Financial Times of London to promote our strengths or to tell us that we’re great. Let’s do so ourselves.

Your City Council is investing in a new branding initiative, that will help crystallize and define what makes us great, and what makes us different from other cities with whom we compete for jobs, tourists, and people.

Our brand is more than a logo. It is our personality. It helps to communicate who we are to the world.

But it’s everyone’s responsibility to promote Windsor.

We all need to be walking advertisements for the City of Windsor. Speaking and reporting about the good things Windsor has to offer, to our neighbours, our co-workers, our friends – everyone.

It’s time for a new mentality in Windsor. One where we always ask ourselves if our words and our deeds help our city’s image – or hurt it.

Working together – on our common interests – is no longer an option. It is a necessity.

It is critical.

In today’s global economy, we have no choice but to think about the big picture – because other places want our jobs. They want our standard of living.

Others are listening. Others are watching us. The old era of airing our dirty laundry in public is over.

We must unite.

We will build upon our strengths. And we must show the world a proud, confident, and forward-looking Windsor.

Four years ago, in my first State of the City address, I said that...

“I believe in a Windsor that has pride in itself, and respect from others.

“I believe in an ambitious Windsor. A place that attracts jobs and investment, by making the Windsorite attitude a source of competitive advantage.

“That’s the Windsor I know, the one that I believe in, and the one I promote. And that’s the Windsor we are building.”

Four years ago, we began the difficult but necessary task of developing and implementing forward-looking strategies and concrete plans to meet the challenges of today, and prepare us for the future.

We are making progress.

When I see a new convention centre being built that will draw new tourists...

Or a new entertainment centre... I know that we are making progress.

When I see Global Sutherland decide to locate in Windsor and create 1,000 new jobs or St. Clair Centre for the Arts locate in this very building...in our downtown ... I know that we are making progress.

When I hear that Valiant Tool is leading the field in advanced manufacturing and is now selling to the aeronautics industry ... I know that we are making progress.

When I hear that Dr. Maev and his team at Tessonics were named the start-up company with the best innovation at the Premier’s Catalyst Awards...

I know that we are making progress.

When I no longer hear about the arena and the need to get it done, I know we are making progress.

When I see the hundreds of volunteers who give back to this community – helping others in large ways and small – I know that we are making progress.

When I see the Mayor of Detroit in this audience, and I know that we are working closely to make our region a two-nation destination, recognizing that we are stronger together than we are apart...

I know that we are making progress.

When I know that our skilled workforce is building the new RT minivan...

And when I know hundreds of millions of dollars are being invested in or planned for our region in commercial development, I know we are making progress.

And when I learn that the Financial Times of London has declared Windsor to be the number one small city for investment in all of North America – I know that we have made progress.

Do we have challenges? Yes. What city doesn't?

We have the ingredients. We have all that is necessary to succeed.

All I need is your commitment to our Windsor...our future.

Lincoln is often credited as saying this:

“Commitment is what transforms a promise into reality.

It is the words that speak boldly of your intentions ... and the actions which speak louder than words.

It is making the time when there is none...

Coming through time after time, year after year.

Commitment is the stuff character is made of. The power to change the face of things.

It is the daily triumph of integrity over scepticism.”

Today, we must commit to work together for our future.

It is in our hands.

My commitment to you, is to serve this City, and get the job done.

Join with me and let's build upon our strengths. Let's focus on achieving success. Let's stick with our municipal plan.

And most importantly ... let's tell the world about the dynamic, growing, exciting, and modern city that we have the privilege to call home.

Merci a tout le monde! Thank you very much!