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STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS
MAY, 1, 2006
CHRYSLER THEATRE
CLEARY INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
WINDSOR, ONTARIO**

Two and a half years ago – in this very room - we came together.

We shared a common idea. The idea of working together ... to build a better *Windsor*.

A stronger Windsor.

A Windsor that has new energy and passion.

An ambitious Windsor, with people who dream big dreams, and inspire one another.

A Windsor with new confidence, and a can-do attitude.

An attitude that says:

“Let’s aim higher than we’ve ever aimed before.”

“Let’s work harder than we’ve ever worked before.”

“Let’s work together more cooperatively than we’ve ever done before.”

And “let’s be the architects of our own future.”

Two and a half years ago, we came together in that spirit.

In the spirit of optimism. Of ambitious plans. And of hope.

We would chart a new course, based on a solid, detailed plan.

We would solve problems. Get things done. And clear away barriers that were preventing Windsor from reaching her true potential.

We had a vision. Of how to make Windsor great again.

A city reborn. A city renewed.

A city with a quality of life that is second to none.

Where families laugh and play.

Where students come to learn, and discover new ways of thinking.

Where immigrants come to start new lives, find new homes, and realize their dreams.

A clean city – with green spaces, beautiful parks, and an amazing riverfront.

A city with a thriving, vibrant culture.

A city ... that people are proud to call home.

A city we all love.

That – is our vision. This is the Windsor, we are building together!

Tonight, we return to this room ... to this place.

To reflect upon what we have accomplished...

To recognize what remains to be done...

And to commit ourselves anew to the achievement of our vision.

Let's think back, over the past two and a half years.

We have celebrated great moments, and positive achievements.

We have also faced difficulties, and challenges.

Difficulties and challenges that could no longer be ignored.

And as we've faced down problems of the past ... and some newer challenges ... we remembered who we are.

We remembered the strength of character of the pioneers who built Windsor.

Who built not only our buildings and roads ... but also our culture and our spirit.

People of Windsor – we are resilient.

We are motivated by a good challenge.

We take care of our own.

When we fall or stumble ... we get right back up.

And we keep going.

We have never run at the first sign of trouble.

We are strong –

Just like our city!

When people ask you about the state of our city, tell them our city is strong.

Tell them that our city is better off today than it was yesterday, and will be even better off tomorrow.

We are Windsor. We are proud. We are confident, and we are determined.

This, is the place where people want to be!

This – is our city!

The progress we have made has not come by coincidence or by chance.

It is the result of forward thinking, dedication, commitment, and hard work.

Those who know me, know that I'm not a fan of quick-fixes. Knee-jerk reactions. Or band-aid solutions to fundamental problems.

I believe in understanding the big picture. Taking a strategic approach. And focusing relentlessly, on achieving our goals.

But a vision alone, does not guarantee success.

There's a great quote I want to share.

“Vision without action, is merely a dream.

Action without vision, just passes the time.

Vision with action, can change a city – as it can change the *world*.”

Together, your City Councillors and I have recognized the need for a vision and the need for action.

We built specific, detailed plans.

Let me tell you something about my colleagues on City Council.

This city would not have come so far, so fast, had it not been for the determination of your City Councillors.

Have there been differences? Yes. Have there been opposing points of view? Of course.

But your City Council is united in the belief that we can build a greater city.

And your City Council has not wavered in its resolve to act, and act decisively, on things that matter.

We have had teamwork – on City Council.

And I want to recognize members of Council, and thank them for their continued partnership and support.

The spirit of teamwork has gone beyond our Council chamber.

People and organizations and groups across our city – are all working together.

That’s significant.

From the United Way ... to the SuperBowl.

From our youth groups ... to arts organizations.

From Essex County ... to the City of Windsor.

From Windsor ... to Detroit.

From Small Business to the Sandwich Development Corporation to the Business Improvement Associations.

From labour ... to our volunteers and our community agencies.

All of us...

We are one region. One city. One people. Finding common ground. Working together.

And while we might represent organizations, or groups ... we're still just people who share a city, and a region.

Who care about good roads, clean air, and a strong local economy.

But above all ... we value community.

What unites us is more important, than any one specific issue or interest.

I am VERY proud, of the spirit of cooperation in this city today.

And I want to see more of it as we move forward together.

As the days and weeks go by, it is all too easy to see achievements in isolation.

As successes in and of themselves.

But they are not.

They are part of a larger plan. A plan that creates a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Early in our term, City Council and I met to set goals and establish our plans.

We asked ourselves fundamental questions.

What future did we want for our city?

Where are we at this point?

And what must happen to get us from where we are, to where we want to be?

The answers to those simple questions have been our guide.

They have been *my* guide.

No secret. Nothing special. Just strategic focus.

Based on our overall vision for this city, four key areas of focus emerged. These areas of focus – when taken together – do *more* good than they would do in isolation.

Our first area of focus is financial stability.

Managing your money better, by placing priority on core services that cities need, and not wasting money on things that a municipal government should never have been paying for in the first place.

We had to tackle debt and high taxes. But more importantly, went after the *root causes* of debt and high taxes.

Second, we needed to provide better service and more accountability. That meant building greater corporate stability. It was time to get back to the idea that the municipality is there to serve the people – and not the other way around.

Third, we're competing for jobs and investment – just like our entrepreneurs and businesses are competing for sales and market share.

To attract and keep smart people and growth industries, modern cities need to focus on their infrastructure, environment and economic development.

We've already had success in these priority areas. And later tonight, I will share with you how we'll be taking exciting, bold steps that will greatly increase our commitment to the environment.

And fourth, we needed to stand up and defend the interests of the people of Windsor. Nowhere has this been more important, than when it comes to our border.

Taken together, these four areas of focus start to create upward momentum.

Taken together, they have been the blueprint that has helped us on our way to achieving our vision.

Let me share with you just some of what's been accomplished, in each of these areas.

We understood we needed to deliver the highest level of service to meet your needs and expectations. But to do so we needed to manage your money better.

With your help we developed a better budget process, based on what's called zero-based budgeting.

That means we no longer just accept a budget based on what was spent the previous year.

Instead, we now conduct a very detailed review of every line in the budget, and work hard to ensure that every dollar is delivering the very best services.

The result? We were able to absorb \$23 million dollars this year alone.

This is significant – because we’ve had more than our fair share of financial challenges.

Pay equity payments...

Nine million dollars in pension increases...

Provincial downloading costs...

And other unexpected costs.

With careful spending, we’ve been able to address another problem that had been around for far, far too long.

Our municipal debt.

Getting that debt under control has been one of the most important accomplishments of this City Council.

We created a new debt reduction strategy.

Our strategy isn’t all that revolutionary – it’s the same way families manage their spending.

If you have money for something, then you can buy it. If you don’t have money for something, you have to wait a little longer.

It’s that simple.

But applying those principles has made a significant difference.

Before we tackled the long-term debt and said enough is enough, it was projected to be approximately \$276 million dollars by the end of this year.

That’s over \$1,300 dollars of debt for every man, woman, and child in our city.

And that’s unacceptable.

Thanks to our debt reduction plan, the debt is now only projected to be \$161 million dollars at the end of this year.

That's a \$105 million dollar difference. In two and half years. Some said it couldn't be done.

The numbers tell the story.

So what does that mean? Why is this so important to me, and important to our City Council?

Our plan has allowed us to pay for large projects without borrowing money.

Projects like the new Huron Lodge ...the new 400 City Hall Square ... and the Norwich Block.

In all, that's nearly \$130 million dollars in projects that are paid for without any new debt.

By paying for these projects today, we are saving \$4.1 million dollars each and every year, that otherwise would have been paid in interest costs.

Not paying money to banks for interest payments means more money for other things.

And by 2010, our plan will result in dividends of approximately \$40 million dollars. Then another \$40 million in each and every one of the following years.

That means we can build. We can build *better* roads. We can build better playgrounds.

We can build *great* arenas.

We can deliver better service.

And that's why it is so important, for us to continue to focus how your tax dollars are being spent.

We're creating a new internal *culture*, at City Hall. A culture that recognizes that in order for Windsor to compete, we need to be efficient. We need to make tax dollars go as far as possible.

That culture is catching on in our municipal agencies as well.

ENWIN is getting back to basics.

Focusing on being a great local electricity provider, and no longer taking unnecessary risks in other business areas.

Over the past two and a half years, ENWIN's debt has been reduced by \$43 million dollars.

We've focused on helping ENWIN to get back on track, and we will do so with our other municipal agencies.

As a result, ENWIN's bond rating was upgraded from BBB+ to A-. That's very important, and very exciting.

Some financial burdens that had been around for far too long have been resolved.

We resolved the MFP issue on our terms – once and for all.

We accelerated the settlements with the Richmond-Norwich block tenants.

And we've leased almost all of our floor space in the Canderel building – thereby saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars per year.

The second area where we've made progress, is corporate stability.

With corporate stability, we can provide better municipal services, that can be accessed by all.

We can meet the needs of our community.

We can build a greater City.

And I want to thank all the dedicated employees who keep caring for our city every day...

Those who fill in the pot holes and keep the traffic lights running...

Those who make sure the water we drink is safe and clean...

Our police officers and firefighters...

Librarians and bus drivers...

Our municipal workers are the very heart of our great city.

I thank you all for your hard work — and for your commitment to Windsor.

So what have we accomplished?

We signed long-term collective bargaining agreements.

We've made accessing municipal services easier by putting them on-line.

We've opened Customer Care Centres at the Forest Glade and College Avenue Community Centre.

We were the first city in Ontario to introduce a 311 line to help people access municipal services.

Since its implementation, 311 has had over fifty thousand phone calls.

It has reduced non-emergency calls to 911 by nearly 30%.

311 is convenient. It has allowed people to get information and services beyond traditional working hours.

The third part of our plan is focused on infrastructure, environment, and economic development...

Basic infrastructure matters. And we're investing record amounts on roads, sewers, and transportation infrastructure.

This year, 69% of our city's Capital budget is going to roads and sewers – up from 54% in 2005.

Better sewers means less flooding – which has been an unreasonable frustration for too many people in our city, for too long.

One of the complaints I'm getting now, is that there's too much road construction, and too much sewer and water work happening.

If that's a complaint, then I'm happy!

We're developing an Environmental Master Plan, which we've never had before.

We are planting one million trees.

We are beautifying our neighborhoods and streetscapes.

We've passed a new pesticide bylaw.

We're bringing people back downtown.

The entire face of our downtown is transforming, and transforming for the better.

Two and half years ago, we talked about building a balanced downtown where people could work, live and play.

We believed in a friendlier, more vibrant downtown.

Some said it couldn't be done.

Some said that we should live with a downtown that many people found intimidating, and just accept it for what it was.

But our Council took action. Our Council *believed* in a better downtown for Windsor.

Today, our downtown has what people did not think was possible.

We have a new transit terminal being built. This was a long time in coming, but now it's happening.

We've got the casino expansion – a 5,000 seat theatre, and a 100,000 square-foot convention centre that will attract conventions and events we could never have had before.

We will have the third-largest convention centre in the province.

An urban campus is coming to the Cleary.

Last year, we talked about the possibility. Today, it is happening. St. Clair College and a thousand students – right downtown.

We've got a vote of confidence from The Keg.

And other exciting new retail stores are moving in.

We are replacing the Cleary guesthouse.

And finally, at long last, we've taken action on that hole in the ground!

Our new economic development partnership with Essex County is done.

This is a great accomplishment, and I thank Warden Raymond for his continued leadership.

Together, we've recognized that what's good for Essex County is good for Windsor, and what's good for Windsor is good for Essex County.

Taken together ... think about what all these accomplishments mean.

When we fit all of these individual pieces of the puzzle together, we see some exciting things happening.

Tax rate reductions in two of the past three years...

The ability to look ahead and invest in things that are critically important to great cities.

Roads, sewers, and public spaces – like an urban village.

An urban village that will come to life on the western super anchor site – that will bring people downtown to live, work, and play.

Perhaps most importantly of all, there is a new attitude and a new pride in our city.

A new attitude that says we can achieve. We can be more and do more. An attitude that dreams ... that dares ... and that does.

Some of the work we've done has yet to bear fruit. But it will.

Often, results don't show themselves within the artificial boundaries of election cycles. Doing things right takes longer. But it works.

We have accomplished a great deal. And I'm proud of what we've achieved.

So tonight marks an important milestone for our city.

As we look back, we can celebrate.

Yet our focus – my focus – is on moving forward.

We live in a global economy. Other cities – other places – are competing with us for jobs and investment.

They want what we want. And they, too, are working hard to become more competitive.

So while we've made a lot of progress on our journey, we cannot coast. We cannot rest.

The road we're on will lead us to the Windsor we all want.

But we cannot go in reverse, or lose our gains.

We cannot take a detour.

Our focus must remain sharply and clearly on moving forward. Staying the course. And not changing direction.

For while we have come a very long way, much more work remains to be done.

And that work ... starts with the fourth area of focus of your City Council.

Defending the interests of the people of this city – especially when it comes to our border crossing.

Windsor accepts the responsibility for hosting the world's most important border crossing.

We know the importance of this strategic gateway to our national, provincial and local economies.

We have for the past 76 years.

We also know this.

As the volume of truck traffic has increased over the last decade, so have the problems associated with it.

We know. We live with those problems every single day.

And that's why there is no one who wants to see the problem solved more than we do.

We want to get it done.

But *not* ... in a way that will make our problems worse.

We all know that there has been a lot of talk in these past few months. A lot of noise, a lot of proposals, and a lot of conflicting views.

So let me be very clear.

I stand with City Council and together we stand with you.

We will defend this city against any cheap intrusion into our communities.

We will continue to press for a solution that gets trucks off of our city streets, out of our neighborhoods, and improves the quality of our lives.

I will not sacrifice the interests of our citizens for a quick fix. Or for a cheap fix.

But that's what may be on offer.

At a recent meeting with residents who live along the Talbot Road/Huron Church corridor, officials from the DRIC said that it was not part of the DRIC mandate to improve the air quality in Windsor...their mandate is only not to make it any worse.

Let me repeat that. They don't see their mandate as improving air quality in Windsor – just not to make it worse.

I find that absolutely unacceptable. City Council finds that unacceptable.

Absolutely, completely, totally unacceptable.

We have an opportunity to make things better. We have an obligation and a responsibility to make things better.

I ask those charged with delivering the new border crossing:

Tell us how you are going to improve the quality of life for our residents.

Tell us how you are going to get trucks off of city streets and reduce air emissions in our city.

Tell us how you are going to create a world-class solution that urban planners and civil engineers will *marvel* at ... because it is *ahead* of the times.

Our children, our families, our health, our future, and our city deserve nothing less.

Modern engineering has come *so* far. Things can be done now that could not have been done thirty years ago ... or even ten years ago.

In 2006, engineers can build islands in the ocean off the desert near Dubai. Islands that can be seen from space.

In 2006, there are tunnels under Boston harbour, and under the English Channel.

In 2006, roads being built in Calgary and Quebec are designed to reduce the effect of harmful emissions caused by car traffic.

Why then ...

Why, I ask, can the same not be done for *our* city?

That's why your City Council and I are going to keep working.

We will not rest until we've got the DRIC agreeing to a solution that is good for Canada...

Good for our friends and neighbours in Michigan...

Good for Ontario...

Good for Essex County...

And good for the people of Windsor.

We know all about the global economy in this city.

We know that it doesn't stand still – not even for a second.

Change is a fact of life – in today's world.

It has been said, that:

For the timid ... change is frightening.

For the satisfied ... it is threatening.

But for the confident ... it is opportunity.

We must embrace change. Make the most of it. And seize the exciting opportunities it creates.

Just last week, the Globe and Mail said what most of us have come to understand.

And I quote:

“Manufacturing, the mainstay of Canada's comfortable growth of the past two decades, is now the purview of countries with cheaper labour.

“Canada must move towards a services economy, based on smart people and great ideas.

“Smart people and great ideas are generally driving developed countries, and maintaining their standards of living.”

Globalization is real.

Our dollar is nearly at ninety cents U.S. Commodity prices have soared. Jobs and capital can move around the world at the click of a button.

In today’s economy, everything moves fast. Companies – or the products they produce – can re-locate with tremendous speed.

The new economy is forcing regions across the globe to become as competitive and efficient as they possibly can.

Cities around the world are dealing with this new reality.

We realized that we needed to put progress ahead of politics, and decided that we could, should, and would succeed in the global economy.

Partnering with Essex County, we formed our first-ever regional economic development model based on a true strategy.

Investors and job creators don’t view the world based on neat, tidy municipal or regional boundaries.

We realized that we needed to build on our strengths.

To innovate. Diversify. Collaborate. And become entrepreneurial. We realized that we either worked together ... or we lost together.

Reinventing our economy is not about evolution. It is about revolution.

Being successful in a global world is not about transition – it’s about transformation.

Transforming from an industrial economy to a new model of urban development – driven by the knowledge economy.

What are some of the key elements of this new, global economy? And how are we getting ready to be successful?

It starts with highly-skilled, educated people. That’s why we are so blessed to have our Community College, and our University.

Today's employers are looking for people with precise skills. And they're willing to give them good, high-paying jobs.

To attract these jobs, we need people. People with skills.

Across the Western world, populations are aging, and many people are preparing for retirement.

As a result, there is going to be huge demand for human capital.

The region that has people – the right people – will attract the jobs.

We have a strong and proud history in automotive manufacturing.

It is thanks to our automotive manufacturing base that we have the highly-skilled, trained workforce that we do in this city.

People who work in the auto sector are capable and adaptable.

This is very important and attractive to businesses in the new economy.

Because workers who already know the ropes require far less training than someone learning from scratch.

So people – skilled, energetic people – are a key ingredient for success in the new economy.

And while other cities are seeking people ... we have people seeking us.

Across Canada, only *Calgary* is welcoming more new immigrants than we are here in Windsor. Our population is expected to double within the next fifty years.

Now, in the short term, being a city that attracts people from around the world can be challenging as we help people get settled in.

Unemployment is at 9.2 percent in this city. That's way too high.

But it's important to understand what's behind that number.

Three thousand more jobs were created in our city last year than the year before.

Opportunities are attracting people to Windsor. Faster than our labour market can absorb them.

And that pushes the unemployment rate upwards.

People want to come here. They want to live here.

And while other places are struggling to maintain the labour supply they need for growth and prosperity, Windsor continues to attract people.

This is great.

But new people need help. And the barriers they encounter when trying to get established, get to work, and get on with realizing their dreams in a new country, make it harder than it needs to be.

We can help. We need to provide newcomers with skills to integrate and adapt.

To help them become part of our ready-made work force.

This is why my office has been working with community partners to establish a workforce development task force.

Through this task force, we'll establish and implement a plan for Windsor and Essex County that would combine the forces of business, labour, educators, government and committed volunteers.

Tonight, I'm pleased to announce the first step. In partnership with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, we have received funding to establish a strategic plan for workforce development.

We're taking action to help find ways to help newcomers get settled and helping with the job of building a better Windsor.

We have so many reasons for optimism.

In light of global restructuring, employers and investors are choosing our region.

In July, Diefenbacher North American announced plans to expand operations in Windsor.

NARMCO Group announced the addition of several dozen new jobs.

In November, DaimlerChrysler announced it will invest \$768 million dollars in its Canadian operations, including a new paint facility in Windsor...

And further investment in the Automotive Research and Development Centre.

New auto parts plants have begun locating in the region to supply the new generation of minivan.

International Truck has located two R&D facilities in our area.

And more exciting news is on the way.

In recent years, the tourism industry has become very important for our city.

And we know the new provincial smoking legislation will present challenges.

But we're getting ready.

We're building plans and programs to keep the tourists coming, and you will hear more about these plans in the coming weeks.

We are not the kind of people who fold our tent and give up at the first sign of trouble.

We know what's coming. We're getting ready. And we will meet this challenge head-on.

That's the way we're thinking and acting in Windsor today!

Over the past two and a half years, we've had great accomplishments. And they have strengthened the foundations of this city.

But many challenges remain.

And the job of resolving those challenges begins today.

Now is the time to begin our great build.

To lead our city forward, to reach its full potential.

Now is the time to create bold, detailed, new plans for what our city will become.

That means planning. And that means *continuing* to get things done.

In the coming months, your City Council has an ambitious agenda.

We are finalizing the Urban Village RFP.

We're reviewing the large industrial/commercial tax rate.

We're finalizing the St. Clair College deal.

We have recommendations coming forward from our Small Business Task Force ... and our Youth Task Force.

We have the opening of the new Huron Lodge.

And we must make a decision ... when it comes to building a new arena.

The time for analysis is over. It's now time to act.

Let me tell you about some of our other exciting plans, for this year, and beyond.

In the coming weeks, Council will be asked to consider a new program recommended by our great administrative team.

Their idea makes the most of our 311 system, and the information it yields.

Eliminating red tape, providing easier access.

Simple ... and the city.

So we call this idea ... SimpliCITY.

SimpliCITY would be the first truly coordinated initiative in a Canadian city that seamlessly integrates customer service activities.

The results will include...

Greater transparency...

Instant access to services and information...

Reduced operational costs...

And better allocation of resource to deliver more effective and efficient municipal services.

Simply put, SimpliCity is about providing better service to our citizens through more intelligent management. Stay Tuned.

I want to speak with you about another idea that is important to us - our confidence, and our pride.

Three short months ago, we accomplished something that had not been done before. Something that many didn't believe was possible.

We joined our friends from across the river, and through our determined effort, we redefined who we were in the eyes of the world.

People who came, left with an extremely positive impression of our cities.

The world came to Detroit and Windsor and experienced the unexpected.

People came with one expectation and left with another.

They were left with a positive impression of our cities and discovered a region with a rich history, culture, pride and a friendship that had no borders.

I want to thank the City of Detroit, and Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, for their continued support and friendship.

And it is my pleasure tonight to welcome a friend of Windsor –

Detroit City Council President ... Ken Cockrel Junior!

During SuperBowl week, we stood strong confident and proud.

And the world took notice.

Together we hosted the first International Superbowl.

And SuperBowl Forty was a tremendous success.

The commissioner of the National Football League, Paul Tagliabue, told me personally how impressed he was.

And how this first-ever international SuperBowl raised the bar for how others will be judged.

We welcomed the world. And the world was amazed.

How were we so successful?

We worked in partnerships.

We said, “let us be involved – and we will deliver.”

And deliver we did.

Yes – the SuperBowl brought tens of millions of dollars into our city.

And yes – it generated massive publicity. Good publicity – that we could never have afforded on our own.

And yes – we had phenomenal NFL events that our new friend Dan Quinn – the Managing Director of NFL Canada and his team – helped to make happen.

And yes – we raised over \$200,000 dollars for a Boundless playground for children of all abilities to be located on our waterfront...

But the true legacy of the SuperBowl, was that we all came together.

To help one another. To celebrate with one another.

We gave ourselves permission to be proud, and to believe in ourselves. We as a region believed in ourselves.

People were saying I am Windsor. Our friends from across the river were proudly saying, “I am Detroit”.

And that spirit was reflected in the faces of the thousands of volunteers and hundreds of others who played a role.

I want the spirit that we showed during the Super Bowl ... to live on.

It was about us discovering ourselves.

Believing in ourselves.

And proudly showing off our city.

Attitude matters. The way people talk and act is contagious. People’s attitudes impact the way cities thrive and grow, or wither and stagnate.

You can feel a new attitude walking the streets of Windsor today. You can feel it.

We felt it during SuperBowl week.

That attitude is making a tangible difference to the quality of life in our city.

The time has come, to embrace this new attitude. To show it. To live it.

To love it.

That's why tonight, I'm sharing a new idea that captures our new attitude.

We've been calling it ... "Love this place".

"Love this place" is about Windsor's new attitude. It is about the better future we're building together. It is about the positive, roll-up-your sleeves approach that is seeing things get done in this city.

And it is about all the reasons why we love Windsor.

Like our symphony.

Our downtown.

Our parks.

And our art gallery.

Our neighbourhoods.

Our friends.

And for those of us who are here at the Cleary tonight, I need your help.

I need you to sign the "Love this Place" banner we have outside this room and write down the things that you love about Windsor.

Now, "Love this Place" and the new attitude we've got in this city, deserves to be celebrated.

As does our City.

A century ago, Windsor's birthday was an important event that brought the whole town – as it was – together.

Yet over the years, the celebration of our birthday was forgotten.

It's time to bring it back.

And tonight, I want to invite everybody to come together – as we did during the SuperBowl. This time, we're celebrating our birthday – just like it was years ago.

We will be holding a birthday party for the City of Windsor on May 24th weekend.

I want everyone to come down to the riverfront, and have a good time. Meet new people. And enjoy what our city has to offer.

There is one other exciting new way we can celebrate Windsor.

For years, Roots clothing has symbolized what's great about being Canadian.

The spirit of outdoor adventure. The beauty of our land. And the effort and perseverance that it takes ... to be an Olympic champion.

And now ... Windsor has its own line of clothing designed by Roots.

It is cool ... modern ... and proud – and so is Windsor.

We will be the first city associated with the Roots brand.

Those of us at the Cleary tonight will be able to see the new Roots wear in the Canadian Club room during the reception after this speech.

Let us know what you think before it goes to Council for final approval.

One of the things *I* love about this place ... is our waterfront.

It has a long and wonderful history. A history that reminds us all of the importance of having a vision, sticking to it, and working hard every day to make our dreams realities.

The planning that eventually led to our spectacular waterfront didn't start in the 70's.

It didn't start in the 60's.

It started prior to the Second World War.

In 1937, the Windsor Local Council of Women submitted a resolution to City Council.

Their proposal: create a continuous park along riverfront land from the Ambassador bridge to Hiram Walker.

These were bold, visionary women. My kind of people.

In the 1980's public meetings were held to discuss the use of lands that would be purchased or obtained from the railways.

This is how Windsor's riverfront of today, was born.

In 1989, the Windsor Star said, quote "Windsor is about to embark on the single most important urban renewal in its history. It is the most challenging and far reaching exercise in the history of our city - the remaking of the riverfront."

Ten years later, the dream was reality. At the celebration of the opening of the Riverwalk in 1999, a proud Roy Battagello said:

"What is happening now is wonderful. But what is the next step?"

Roy – we hear you.

If the riverfront was the urban renewal project for the 20th century...

Then we must build upon that legacy and begin the urban renewal project of the 21st century!

In the 80's, the City of Windsor – in cooperation with the railways – accomplished a relatively large rail rationalization that involved removing rail operations from the waterfront and in downtown Windsor, and releasing the area for development

Today, six major rail corridors remain in Windsor. In total, there are approximately 55 kilometres of rail lines, 75 railway crossings, and 148 acres of rail yards within our city limits.

These old rail lines act as barriers. They produce noise and vibration impact that reduces the quality of life in our city.

We know that having a clean, green, well-developed urban environment is critical to attracting and keeping jobs and investment in today's modern economy, and creating a healthier quality of life for our residents.

City Council and I have started the plans that provide the framework for transforming the city's old rail lines from a rundown, divisive old web across our city, into a system of trails and opportunity.

It will run through all five wards, connecting neighbourhoods to one another, creating green space and recreational paths, converting brownfields and scrap yards – all the way to the riverfront.

This can be done remarkably easily – with remarkably little impact on our freight or passenger train traffic.

How will we do it? Based on experience in other cities, relatively easily.

We have already started the hard work. The planning documents are all nearing completion.

A rail study being conducted in partnership with the Federal government is nearing completion. It will provide the technical framework for rationalization and consolidation.

Our brownfield and environmental report will provide us the tools to convert these lands to new uses.

So, what will the results if our rails to trails plan be?

- Reduced road traffic and delays from fewer rail crossings.
- Reduced air and noise pollution.
- New trails for walking, cycling, and rollerblading.

In all, a better, greener Windsor.

There will be lots of input and discussion on how to make the most of these valuable lands.

Councillors' portfolios will include responsibility for determining and guiding the process in each of their Wards.

Our riverfront took decades to complete. And this process will take time as well.

But the time to start ... is now.

This plan will change and improve the face of our city. It will change the pattern of regional sprawl, delivering a better quality of life for future generations.

Can you see the future of our city?

A stronger, more diverse economy.

An urban village. Streetscapes.

A vibrant downtown.

Clean, welcoming parks.

Fewer brownfields thanks to environmental clean up.

Trails for outdoor activities.

In all ... a Windsor we'll love even more.

Two and a half years ago, this was a different city than it is today.

And if you asked most people if they thought we would have come so far ... so fast ... they wouldn't have believed that it was possible.

Look around this city.

It is being re-built. There are cranes in our skies. There is excitement on our streets.

And there is a sense of purpose and promise of a better future.

Our efforts will take time. Anything worthwhile always does.

But we are working towards a vision. All we have already achieved, and the things we're starting tonight – are part of a broader plan.

Pieces of a larger puzzle that fit together.

None of what we have achieved was a coincidence. None of it happened by chance.

Our vision of a better Windsor. Our plan to get things done. Our spirit of working together. And our confident, ambitious attitude.

These are the ingredients of our success. These are the reasons we're better off and more secure today than we were two and a half short years ago.

Thanks to what we've done together ... tomorrow will be even better than today.

Because the truth is, we're just getting started!

All of you...

Every single one of you here at the Cleary ... or watching from home...

You have the opportunity to reach your full potential.

To realize your dreams.

To succeed. To make a difference.

And you have the opportunity to do so, right here in Windsor.

This is your time. This is our time.

Our time, for greatness.

Our time, to build an incredible city.

Our time, to create a New Windsor.

Believing in our vision ... sticking to our plan ... and working hard to make it happen.

Together, there is nothing we cannot accomplish!

Together, there is still so much more for us to do!!

Thank you very much!