

Mayor's Speech

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Check Against Delivery

Mayor Bevilacqua committed to bringing university to Vaughan during this Term of Council

Mayor announces city-building taskforces to be chaired by Councillors

VAUGHAN, ON (Dec. 4, 2018) – The following is Vaughan Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua's keynote address, delivered during the inaugural meeting of the 2018 to 2022 Term of Council:

"Thank you to Flight Sgt. Prajapati for the thoughtful introduction. I had the pleasure of meeting this talented, disciplined and focused young woman during our Remembrance Day ceremony. Goral delivered a moving speech, marking the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War by paying tribute to the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice. I appreciate your dedication to this community and wish you the best on your journey. It is bright as it is promising.

"We are blessed to have future leaders among us. I want to acknowledge the children of the Herbert H. Carnegie School Choir. Thank you for that wonderful rendition of the national anthem – a constant reminder of how fortunate we all are to live in this great country.

"I extend my sincere appreciation to Angelica Di Castro. Your voice is a true gift. Thank you for sharing it with us.

"Good evening, Members of Council, honoured guests, esteemed colleagues, ladies and gentlemen. Let me begin by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to my children, my parents and my entire family. Thank you for your unconditional love and support.

"To the hundreds of volunteers—under the leadership of Michelle DeBuono—who worked on my campaign and gave countless hours of their time and talent, I offer my sincere appreciation for always believing in me and my mission.

"I would like to thank the members of my office staff: Joy Ciafardoni, Ally Liscio and Laura DiSevo.

"I also want to pay special tribute to City Clerk Todd Coles and the Inauguration Committee who worked tirelessly to make tonight's ceremony possible.

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“From our administration, let me also recognize City Manager Daniel Kostopoulos and Margie Singleton, CEO of Vaughan Public Libraries.

“In attendance are Stuart Betts, Commanding Officer of #4 District—with York Regional Police—and Deryn Rizzi, Chief of Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service. Thank you for all you do to keep residents and neighborhoods safe.

“I wish to thank Joyce Usher-Mesiano, Chair of the Board of the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, for joining us this evening as well. I look forward to delivering my annual Chamber Address in February.

“I am grateful to the Honourable Justice Phillip Sutherland for administering the Declaration of Office to all of Council.

“On behalf of all of Council, we thank the voters who have given us their trust to represent them at City Hall. It is greatly appreciated, cherished and treasured.

“I congratulate my elected colleagues who will join me over the next four years in service to our fellow neighbours.

“I thank outgoing Regional and Local Councillor Sunder Singh for her contributions. As well, I welcome back Regional and Local Councillor Linda Jackson. I want to acknowledge former Councillor Mario Racco, who is in attendance.

“This Council is made up of engaged and experienced individuals. We must always be mindful that it is a privilege to serve. Through the democratic process, we have earned our mandates – and our seats in Council Chamber—from the citizens of this great city. It is our responsibility to set the vision for the next four years and beyond. It is the role of our professional administration to implement it.

“A few weeks ago, on November 21st, I marked my 30th anniversary in public office. I find myself recalling that day when I first entered the House of Commons as a 28-year-old Member of Parliament. I was hopeful, confident and focused on making a positive difference in my community and my country. My enthusiasm, sense of purpose and dedication have never wavered.

“Over the years, I have been fortunate to have acquired a lot of experience at the local, national and international level. Experience is important. Experience is important for the road ahead. It is important in 2018 and it will be important in 2022.

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“As we prepare to write the next chapter, I find myself reflecting on the covenant I made with all of you when I first recited the Declaration of Office. I remain humbled, grateful and energized to have received yet another strong vote of confidence to serve in our city’s highest office and to lead this Council and our City.

“Eight years ago, I spoke of fulfilling the promise of our city. My vision was crystal clear. I saw a Vaughan that would be praised for its character and integrity. Acclaimed for its responsible, sustainable planning and economic leadership. Renowned for its first-class administration, transparency, accountability and respect for the hard-earned taxpayers’ dollars.

“I envisioned a place where sports, the arts, music, theatre and architectural excellence would thrive and where new and innovative ideas would be nurtured and shared widely. I believed we could build a downtown core that was so vibrant, people from all walks of life would be drawn to this dynamic expression of modernity and avant-garde thinking. I envisioned a place where diversity was celebrated. Where thinkers and innovators gathered to share their knowledge. Where reaching higher, aiming farther and thinking outside of the box were encouraged and supported.

“So, it is with confidence and conviction that I stand before you to state that over the past eight years, we have achieved transformational results. We have neither wavered, questioned nor shied away from stepping out of our comfort zone and taking bold, necessary and courageous action to create a new Vaughan—a destination of choice. It’s no longer a debate of whether we can or whether we will because we have and because we are.

“In this election, the voters were also clear. The people overwhelmingly endorsed our agenda for positive change that embodies the past two terms. They are in favour of improving access to modern, front-line and world-class healthcare. They are thrilled that Vaughan has a subway. They have faith in our inclusive approach to city-building. They trust our approach to governance. They want to stay the course, press ahead and never return to the days of old—where the potential of Vaughan was untapped.

“These have been the best eight years of our city’s history. Today, we all see a Vaughan that is praised as a nationally acclaimed leader in city-building. This is the way forward.

“The Vaughan Accord has been celebrated as a catalyst, responsible for shaping our positive image, guiding Council decisions and helping ensure we achieve and exceed key objectives. By adhering to the values upon which the Vaughan Accord has been built – mutual respect, dedication, integrity and accountability – Council, staff and the community are forging ahead with building a world-class city.

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"You would be hard-pressed to find any city in Canada more determined to make openness and transparency a cornerstone of city-building than what we have undertaken and implemented. Vaughan has an ironclad governance framework.

"We are renowned for our first-class administration, for taxpayers' hard-earned dollars and the ability to safeguard investments for the quality public services we rely on each day. We use best practices to guarantee fiscal sustainability and credibility. These bedrock principles are guiding our efforts to secure greater efficiencies and maximize every dollar we are entrusted to manage. Our acclaimed public institutions and sound public finances have been fundamental to our efforts to attract, retain and ignite job-creating opportunities and to elevate Vaughan's place in the world as an economic powerhouse.

"The City's prosperity over the past two terms has been remarkable.

I have long maintained that cities are the economic engines of our nation and I can assure you that this city is firing on all cylinders. Vaughan leads with an economic growth rate of 3.6 per cent—far outpacing Ontario and Canada. Since 2010, nearly 55,000 new jobs have been created in Vaughan. We have the highest employment in York Region. We are home to nearly 12,000 businesses that employ more than 218,000 people.

"Our value proposition speaks for itself. Vaughan is the place to be.

"The last two terms have been marked by an unwavering commitment to deliver a reliable, efficient and world-class transportation system. We are also supporting the hundreds of thousands of men and women who rely on our extensive network of roads and rail. This December marks one year since Vaughan made history by becoming the first and only municipality outside of Toronto to be connected by the TTC Subway with our signature transit hub in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.

"Today, the VMC is the largest and most ambitious project in the City's history. As our skyline takes shape, we continue to reach new and unprecedented heights.

"We are building with a mindset that goes beyond mere structures. Vaughan's future planning efforts embody a higher purpose of public service. It reflects decisions that seek to protect and elevate the quality of life for our neighbours. Urban planning should be a force for good. It must be utilized to help people reach their full potential. People dream of calling Vaughan home. We are fulfilling their dreams.

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“Edgeley Pond and Park is the largest open space, City-owned piece of land in the VMC. It’s the heart of the community, a signature amenity and reflects our dedication to environmental stewardship. Vaughan is a green city. We are delivering on our commitment to beautify our landscape while nourishing its spirit. We formally opened Phase One of the new 900-acre North Maple Regional Park. Once fully complete, Vaughan’s North Maple Regional Park will be larger than New York City’s very own Central Park.

“When I reflect on my first inauguration, I spoke of my vision for a city where people from throughout the world view diversity as a unifying strength and a defining characteristic of citizenship. Culture Days have sparked a renaissance that is fostering a greater sense of community awareness and appreciation for the diversity of cultures and faiths that thrive throughout our city.

“The efforts and events of our Spirit of Generosity commitment have raised more than \$30 million in contributions from compassionate, dedicated and thoughtful individuals. Proceeds have gone to help more than 150 not-for-profit and community organizations that play a vital role in touching the lives of countless people.

“As co-chair of the \$250-million Mackenzie Health Foundation’s Exceptional Care Belongs Here Campaign, I was proud to announce that the De Gasperis and Kohn families made a generous donation to the Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital. We have well surpassed the \$100-million mark in contributions. We recently marked the hospital topping-off ceremony to celebrate reaching the highest point of construction and moving closer to opening the hospital in late 2020. Building this hospital is about investing in the health and well-being of our citizens and ensuring we all have access to the best possible front-line healthcare for generations to come.

“I also announced that the Cortellucci family stepped forward with a donation toward the building of the new Hospice Vaughan–Mario & Nick Cortellucci Hospice Palliative Care Centre of Excellence—which is expected to open in 2019. We are grateful for their continued support and belief in city-building.

“Thirty years as an elected official have taught me many things. Among them is to remain steadfast in what you believe to be right, just and fair. Always align your actions to sound values, principles and beliefs, which focus on the greater good—and be all in, regardless of the challenges you may face.

“These are times when you must be creative and resourceful. As the provincial government attempts to balance the budget, the province-wide cuts are real, but so is my desire to bring a university to our city. One must never give up. Life is easier when there is funding available. However, one’s ability is tested during challenging times.

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"I remain committed to bringing a university to our city during this term in office.

"Like the hospital, hospice, subway and other city-building initiatives, there were doubters, but I am a believer determined to deliver to our city what the residents deserve. I never allow noise or static to get in the way of achieving positive results for my community. My approach to governing is rooted in hope and optimism. And this approach, over the past eight years, has served the citizens of Vaughan extremely well.

"At the outset of my speech, I discussed the clear message voters shared during the election. They were equally candid about what we needed to do better. Improving traffic, building affordable housing and responsible development planning were conveyed to all of us.

"While we have made significant inroads on the transit and transportation file, I will continue working with all governments to explore new and innovative ways to bring relief to commuters. To that end, I am announcing that taskforces will be created to be chaired by Members of Council to shape our collective work throughout the new Term of Council. They include a separate taskforce on: Transportation and Infrastructure; Economic Prosperity, Investment and Social Capital; Environmental Leadership; Older Adult Empowerment; Diversity and Citizen Engagement; and Effective Governance.

"We will encourage and invite respected stakeholders, sought-after opinion leaders and concerned citizens to join us on these taskforces and to roll up their sleeves, undertake meaningful work, and deliver real and profound results. Each taskforce will report back to all of Council. This will allow for greater public debate and ensure we turn ideas into real results.

"Given the importance of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, I will continue to Chair the VMC Sub-Committee. It has played an important and vital role in shaping our downtown. The Mayor's Smart City Advisory Taskforce will carry on with its mandate to advance a culture of knowledge and pursue continuous improvement. As well, a special advisory committee will be established to maximize the potential of the hospital precinct. A place where citizens will get exceptional care.

"My friends, Vaughan's golden era continues to shine and touch the lives of all citizens.

"With enthusiasm, vision and love for the city I proudly serve, I look forward to forging ahead to build on our shared accomplishments. But we know there is much more work to be done.

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"We will continue with a plan that will launch our city to unprecedented heights. Vaughan deserves the best and I submit to all of you once again that it is my duty as your mayor to ensure that is what our citizens receive.

"We have done exceptionally well as a city and we've only just begun.

"With civility, let us go forth united with unbridled enthusiasm, optimism and hope to work collectively for the common good. This is the way forward.

"For our city, the best is yet to come!

"Thank you!"

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ABOUT VAUGHAN: The City of Vaughan is one of Canada's fastest growing cities with a population of more than 335,000. Incorporated in 1991, Vaughan includes the communities of Concord, Kleinburg, Maple, Thornhill and Woodbridge. This culturally diverse municipality is located in the heart of York Region and the Greater Toronto Area.

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