



State of the City Address

Mayor Linda Buchanan

Delivered on June 3, 2026

Good morning, everyone. Thank you for being here today for my annual State of the City Address.

I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional territories of the Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. These nations remain deeply connected to these lands and waters and as we gather and build community, it is critical that we honour and acknowledge that this has been their home since time immemorial.

Thank you to the Urban Land Institute of BC for hosting today's event, the Pinnacle Hotel staff, and our sponsors: Annette Kim, Nomad Coffee; and in particular Polygon Homes and Vancouver Fraser Port Authority.

As always, I want to thank Council. I feel incredibly fortunate to work alongside such a committed group of people who care deeply about our community. We have done tremendous work together.

Today is one of my favourite days of the year. As I look around the room, it's lovely to see so many familiar faces as well as new ones here today. It is a pleasure to be here with all of you: business leaders, partners, innovators and community builders, residents and non-profits, people who don't just live and/or work in the city, but reimagine it and help build it alongside us.

The State of the City gives us the opportunity to take a step back together and look clearly at where we have been, where we are today, and where we are going next. Not simply to reflect, and not simply to catalogue what we have accomplished, but to understand what it truly means to be meeting the challenge of these tough and uncertain times when so many people are making sacrifices to get ahead.

This is the final State of the City address for this council term, and that brings with it a certain responsibility to look at the commitments we made and ask how they have impacted people, strengthened our economy, and positioned our city for what lies ahead.

When I think about the past several years, what stands out most is not any one decision or project, but the context in which those decisions were made. We have been operating in a time defined by uncertainty. A global pandemic re-shaped how people live and work and global tensions have risen, leading to greater division and conflict. Life feels stressful for many and families feel stretched. Inflation has put pressure on households and businesses alike. Housing challenges have intensified. Climate impacts are no longer theoretical—they are visible and immediate. Frustration continues to grow around transportation and congestion, here and across the region.

In moments like this, it would have been easy for council to slow down, to defer decisions, or to wait for conditions to improve before acting. But that is not what this moment required. It is not what we chose to do.

Instead, we leaned in. We made deliberate choices about how we would grow, where we would invest, and reaffirmed what kind of city we wanted to become—not just today, but ten and twenty years from now.

From the start, we committed ourselves to a bold vision: To become the healthiest small city in the world. That vision was never just a slogan. It became a lens through which we made decisions. We understand that health is not only about healthcare, although that's important; foundationally, what determines health is whether people can afford to live in our community. Whether seniors can age in place. Whether families feel connected. Whether businesses can thrive. Whether people can move safely and efficiently through the city. And whether residents feel they belong.

That shift in thinking is what residents are feeling today as they explore everything our great city has to offer. It is reflected in North Vancouver being recognized, for the second consecutive year, as the most livable city in Canada.

What matters more than the recognition itself is what lies behind it. As you will hear me say again and again, it is a testament to the people who call our city home, a community willing to make long-term investments even during difficult times; a city that continues to grow while holding onto its sense of connection. And a shared understanding that livability does not happen by accident. It is something we build every single day and in partnership with all of you.

I would now like to share a video that celebrates all the wonderful elements that make our city the incredible community it is today.

That livability I just spoke of, I was reminded of that last summer, when we opened Topo Park in Central Lonsdale. I was moved by a simple yet powerful moment.

I met a young family that had just moved into the neighbourhood from abroad, and their children were running freely through the park. The parents told me they chose to move to the City because they wanted something increasingly difficult to find in growing urban regions: a place where they could walk to daily needs, access transit, and raise their children in a connected community where they had a sense of belonging.

That same day at the opening, I met Maria, a senior who came specifically to thank me. Because of the City's inclusionary zoning bylaw, she was able to return to the neighbourhood she had called home for nearly three decades and move into a new home in the redeveloped property. Never did she believe that would happen in her lifetime.

Topo Park is new, but what it represents is not. It represents a pattern of decisions our Council has made that show up across the city. Over the past several years, we have made deliberate investments in the places where connections happen and in partnerships that help people remain part of our community.

Earlier this year, we celebrated a major milestone with the completion of Phase 1 of the North Shore Neighbourhood House Hub redevelopment on City-owned land. Catalyst opened Timberline and the doors to 89 below-market rental homes. Additionally, a new family respite centre—financed and operated by Care BC—will open this fall on the podium level, offering support to seniors and families. What began several years ago as a vision for a more inclusive community hub is now becoming a reality because of persistence, partnerships, and a shared commitment.

Earlier this year, I attended the opening of Morningstar, a specialized safe house created by Hollyburn Community Services Society and government partners. Morningstar provides housing and support for those experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity, helping them stabilize while they look for more permanent housing.

That same week, I visited The Lively, an infill rental project of 40 studios and townhomes. This project built by Starlight also includes four below-market homes in partnership with Hollyburn Society that were secured as part of the rezoning. These homes for seniors are part of the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program through BC Housing.

Today, both Morningstar and The Lively are fully occupied, improving the quality of life for some of our most vulnerable residents. One resident shared these words: “Having stable housing has completely changed my life. I’m so grateful for Hollyburn’s support. I feel like a human being again.” Another said, “Now that I have a home, I can focus on my health.”

These are the stories that stay with me. Since becoming Mayor, we have invested close to \$450 million in the infrastructure, programs and services people need and deserve. These investments are never just about infrastructure. They are about dignity, belonging, and quality of life. That is at the heart of becoming the Healthiest Small City in the World. And we continue to build on that vision.

I am very proud to announce that on July 25th, we will open the new Harry Jerome Community Recreation Centre and Silver Harbour Seniors’ Activity Centre—the largest recreation investment in our City’s history at \$230 million. And at this time, you are all officially invited to what will be a great celebration. Even more proud, this project is being delivered on budget.

Crosscut Bridge, at the top of Loutet Park near 17th, is nearing completion, reconnecting two city neighbourhoods that have long been divided by Highway 1. A new school, Cloverley Elementary, is opening this September, alongside new childcare including before-and-after school care with a \$3.5 million dollar investment from the City.

Across the city, we continue to invest in parks, public spaces, mobility infrastructure, and community amenities that improve residents’ daily lives. Nowhere is our transformation more visible than at the Shipyards. Last year we celebrated its 5th Anniversary. In just a few years, it has become one, if not the most vibrant, public space in the region and a destination recognized well beyond the North Shore.

The economic impact, gleaned from consumer spending and visitation data, estimates that for every \$1 the City invested in operating The Shipyards in 2024 it could drive \$84 of spending at restaurants and retail.

In just 10 days, that momentum continues as we partner with Canada Soccer to host Canada Soccer House during the FIFA World Cup. Thousands of fans and visitors will experience the energy, hospitality, and breathtaking waterfront setting that define our community. That investment is expected to generate millions in direct economic benefit for our economy while showcasing our city on a global stage. But the success of places like The Shipyards does not happen overnight. It happens because we chose to invest in public spaces, local businesses, and experiences that bring people together.

That same thinking is shaping the future of Central Lonsdale. Earlier this year, Council endorsed the Great Street Project for Central Lonsdale—an important moment for that neighbourhood and for our city.

This work is about more than revitalizing a beloved street; it is about shaping the heart of our city for the long term. Central Lonsdale has long been a strong, local-serving commercial area. It is home to small businesses, essential services, and thousands of residents, including new neighbours who have recently moved in with the completion of the Elle and Lennox by Polygon, all of whom rely on the services in this area every day.

Like every great city, we don't stand still. We evolve. As such, this plan lays out a thoughtful path forward, one that strengthens economic vitality, improves livability, and creates a place where people don't just pass through, but choose to spend time.

Great streets matter, they create community. They support businesses, and they shape how people experience and feel about a city. We are already seeing that happen. One local business owner, Armin, wrote to tell me about a small game installation placed outside his shop, Mashti Café, by City staff. He joined in the fun by handing out free bananas to those who participated in the game. He described how this small change helped turn the street into a place where people gathered, engaged, lingered and how his business prospered because it found itself at this small center of community.

A simple game is a small gesture, but one that reflects something much bigger: when we create spaces that invite people in, community and economic activity follow. Those moments matter, and that is the impact we are working toward. Through our public engagement on the Lonsdale Great Street project, residents have been clear about what they want: more green space, more gathering places, more vibrancy, more local businesses, as well as a neighbourhood that feels welcoming, with a strong sense of community and is active year-round.

The formation of the new Central Lonsdale BIA will be a natural partner with the City to move this vision forward.

That kind of transformation also depends on how people move through the city and region. Over the past year, we have made meaningful progress on transportation. The accelerated extension of the R2 RapidBus from Metrotown to the North Shore this September, four months early, is a major milestone.

This extension will improve access to jobs, housing, education, and services while helping to reduce congestion across the region.

This achievement reflects years of collaboration and advocacy from North Shore local and Indigenous governments, and I want to thank the Mayors' Council, TransLink, and our community partners, North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, Seaspan, the Quay and Capilano University, for helping us move this forward.

But I need to be very clear: this is only the first step in seeing what the North Shore needs. As TransLink continues planning for full Bus Rapid Transit to the North Shore, we now need a firm commitment from senior governments, particularly the province, to move Bus Rapid Transit forward as the immediate next step. If communities like ours are expected to continue delivering housing and supporting economic growth, then the transportation infrastructure must follow. The North Shore cannot wait any longer. And I am asking everyone here to lend their voices as we continue to advocate for our public transit needs.

At the same time, we continue improving walking and cycling by creating safer, more accessible streets throughout the city and by expanding cycling connections through projects like the Crosscut Bridge, St. Andrew's Greenway, and the Eastside Connector. Here, we understand that transportation is not only about movement. It is about economic resilience and quality of life. When people can move more efficiently, businesses have better access to employees and customers. Residents spend less time stuck in traffic. Communities become more connected. That is the kind of future we are building along Lonsdale.

This work will continue to support long-standing businesses like Guido's Barbershop, House of Clogs, Jack Lonsdale's Public House, and Andreas Restaurant, while also focusing on creating opportunities for the next generation of entrepreneurs to invest here. Which is why we are advancing the next phase of the Health Innovation District anchored around Lions Gate Hospital and the growing cluster of over 750 health-related businesses already located in Central and Lower Lonsdale.

The opportunity before us is significant. We have the potential to position the City as a globally recognized center for health innovation that will also directly support our residents by improving health outcomes, enhancing quality of life, and helping people live healthier, longer, and more independently. By building a collaborative ecosystem that connects healthcare, research, education, industry, and government, we can accelerate innovation, attract investment and talent, advance healthy living and aging, and help reduce pressure on the acute care system. At the same time, we will create a major long-term economic opportunity for the city tied to life sciences, one of the fastest-growing sectors in our economy.

Over the past year, I have brought together key stakeholders through a Leaders' Roundtable to help define a shared vision. We are now moving into the next phase of implementation and there will be more to say on that in the coming weeks.

Another sector of vital importance to our local economy is our port and shipbuilding industry. As Canada increases its focus on defense, Arctic sovereignty, supply chain resilience, and trade infrastructure, the strategic importance of our port—and the critical role of Seaspan in Canada's national shipbuilding strategy—continues to grow.

This presents a significant opportunity for the city and the North Shore to leverage this moment, to strengthen our position in maritime innovation, advanced manufacturing, logistics, and national economic resilience. In doing so, we can drive long-term economic growth, attract investment, and create more high-value jobs for our community.

We are also strengthening the City's financial foundation through long-term planning, asset management, improved reporting, reserve and investment policies, and a disciplined approach to securing external funding. That discipline matters. It allows us to keep investing, while keeping affordability for taxpayers firmly in view. This approach has allowed us to deliver a 2.9% tax rate this year (0.9 operating, 2% capital)—one of the lowest in the region. This discipline allows us to seize new opportunities when they present themselves.

The outdoor Harbour Swim Deck at Waterfront Park, announced this past November, is a clear example of how strong financial stewardship translates into real community benefit. Supported by a \$16 million contribution from the Weston Family Foundation through Swim Drink Fish, along with an additional \$5 million in capital funding from the City, we have been able to bring this vision to reality.

It will extend the success of The Shipyards westward and help transform our waterfront in a way unlike anything previously seen along our shores. Once operational, this new attraction is expected to generate up to \$10 million annually in local spending, strengthening our visitor economy and supporting local businesses.

As we look ahead, there is no doubt that the challenges we face will persist. But the difference today is that we are better prepared to meet those challenges. We have a clear vision. We have stronger partnerships. We are in a strong financial position. We have a deeper understanding of what it takes to move forward responsibly in a way that is both ambitious and grounded.

When I speak with residents across the city, one conversation that has stayed with me was with a long-time resident, Frank, who told me he has seen our city change many times over the decades. His perspective was simple but important: change is inevitable, but how you manage it is what defines a community. That is exactly right.

The work before us is not about avoiding change. It is about shaping it in a way that strengthens what people value most. It is about making decisions that reflect both where we are today and where we need to be in the future. That work is never finished.

Meeting the challenge is not something we do once and move on from. It is an ongoing responsibility. It requires leadership. And the willingness to continue making difficult but necessary decisions.

As we come to the end of this council term, I find myself thinking less about individual projects or milestones, and more about the people who experience this city every day. When we talk about meeting the challenge, this is what we mean. Not just how we grow. But who we are building this city for. Because a city is not defined by what it builds, but by how well it supports people at every stage of life.

Not long ago, I watched a moment unfold in a neighbourhood park near my home. A grandparent sat on a bench watching their grandchild while, nearby, the parent talked with a neighbour. Across the street, people gathered outside the local coffee shop while the owner greeted residents passing by.

There was nothing extraordinary about it—and yet it captured something essential. A child who felt safe. A parent who felt connected. A senior who remained part of community life. A local business woven into the daily rhythm of the neighbourhood. That kind of moment only exists in a city that has invested in people. A city that understands connection and economic vitality are deeply linked. That is the city we have been working toward—and will continue building together.

Seven and a half years ago, I became the Mayor of the City, and I am not done yet. Today, I am going to end with the sentence I started with at my first-ever event as a new Mayor: I believe that in the end, the true measure of a city is whether every generation can see themselves in its future and know they belong.

That is the standard we will continue to meet. I cannot wait to continue this work with you in the years to come.