The City of North Vancouver
OFFICE OF MAYOR LINDA BUCHANAN

Inaugural Address by Mayor Linda Buchanan
Delivered in City Council Chambers
November 2, 2026

Building a Brighter Future Together: A City That Works for All, Today and for Generations to Come

Honoured guests, members of Council, ladies and gentlemen, good evening.

Since our City's incorporation in 1907, generations of elected leaders have had the privilege and responsibility of helping shape North Vancouver.

Today, as we begin a new Council term, we carry forward that tradition of public service and stewardship. It is a pleasure to be here with you tonight to deliver this inaugural address.

North Vancouver is home and the people and our future matter deeply to me. I am profoundly honoured for the trust residents have placed in me to serve a third term as Mayor. I accept that trust with humility, optimism and a strong sense of responsibility.

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

We are neighbours and partners, bound by a shared history and by a continued spirit of collaboration and reconciliation. I am grateful for our relationships and our ongoing work on many shared priorities.

On behalf of Council, I would like to thank everyone for attending this important occasion. Public service requires commitment and courage. Thank you to everyone who put their name forward for this election, and to the families, friends and volunteers who supported them—no campaign is easy, and every campaign is a team effort.

To my campaign team, and in particular Ally, Daisy and Signe, who took time at the start of their Grade 12 year to knock on doors with me, thank you.

For me personally, I want to thank my family that is here tonight, in particular my Mom, Kevin and our four children and their partners, for all your love and support, during the campaign and every day. I could not do this work without you.

To every resident who voted, asked questions, shared ideas or took part in the conversation about our future, thank you.

Our democracy is strongest when everyone has the opportunity to be heard. That requires not only the courage to speak, but also the willingness to listen, to respect different perspectives, and to make space for voices beyond our own.

I want to recognize a few people who are here with us tonight: Janise, who cast her first municipal ballot as a new Canadian citizen; Ally, Daisy, and Signe who invited me to their high school leadership group last spring, and nine-year-old Finlay, who has, over the past several years, come in front of council advocating for safer crossings for himself and his friends.

Each of you participated in the election in your own way, and you remind us that civic engagement is not limited by how long you have been a citizen in our city, by your age or by whether you are eligible to vote.

Our city is stronger when people of every generation know their voices matter, that they are heard, and that they can help shape the future of their community. Thank you for being part of our city's democratic life.

My thanks as well to our Chief Administrative Officer, Dr. Leanne McCarthy, to our General Managers and to every City employee who keeps essential services running and supports Council in delivering for residents.

Our success as a Council is not possible without the tremendous support and professional work we receive from all municipal employees.

I thank our election staff for their professionalism and integrity in ensuring the election was run to the highest standard.

To Ms. Amelia Cifarelli, our Corporate Officer; the Clerk's Office; and Mrs. Kendra McEachern and Ms. Jenny Peng from the Mayor's Office, thank you for your work on tonight's ceremony.

For this evening's inauguration, I would like to recognize and thank the following people for their participation:

- The Honourable Justice Michael Thomas for performing the Oath of Office Ceremony
- Councillor Syexwaliya Ann Whonnock, of the Squamish Nation Council, for her welcome
- The RCMP Colour Party: Cst. David Wen and Cst. Daniel An
- The North Vancouver City Fire Department Honour Guard: Firefighter Trevor Townsend and Firefighter Sam Sedun
- Terry Shaw, Piper, of the J.P. Fell Pipe Band and
- Caroline Roder, Vocalist from Sutherland Secondary School for the Singing of 'O Canada'

Although outgoing Councillor Jessica McIlroy is unable to join us this evening, I want to recognize and thank her for eight years of dedicated service to our City. Jessica brought thoughtful leadership and a deep commitment to climate and environmental issues, social justice and equity.

Her contributions at this Council table have been meaningful and will continue to shape our city. I am grateful to have served alongside her and proud to call her a colleague and friend.

To Councillors Back, Bell, Valente, Girard and Shahriari, congratulations on your re-election. Welcome back. I also want to extend a warm welcome to Councillor Andrew Robertson on his election. We are so pleased to have you join us. Each of you brings experiences, convictions and ideas that will strengthen our work. I look forward to serving alongside you in a spirit of respect, collaboration and shared purpose.

When I reflect on 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. Housing costs have strained household budgets. Businesses have navigated rising expenses. Congestion has affected daily life. Extreme heat and heavy rainfall have made the effects of climate change impossible to ignore.

These challenges are real, and they do not disappear because an election is over. But neither does our capacity to act.

We have shown what long-term planning, partnership and purposeful investment can accomplish. Being recognized as Canada's Most Livable City for two consecutive years is a source of pride and reflects the quality of life we have worked hard to create.

Our responsibility now is to build on that success: to keep getting the basics right, deliver the services and infrastructure people rely on, and respond to the changing needs of our growing city. It also means thinking boldly about the future, making thoughtful long-term investments and ensuring our city remains inclusive, resilient and livable for everyone, today and for generations to come.

When we set out to become the healthiest small city in the world, we understood that health is about more than healthcare. It means having a safe home, meaningful work, a way to get where you need to go, access to nature and recreation, thriving local businesses, and places that make you feel connected. That understanding will continue to guide us.

In the coming term, we must continue building a city where people can afford to live and belong. Housing remains central to that work. We need a wider range of homes: supportive and accessible, rental, non-market, mid-market, workforce, options for families, townhomes and row housing—so that our most vulnerable residents have the housing and supports they need, young people can establish roots, families can grow, and older adults can remain in the community they know.

That includes creating opportunities for young people who have grown up here and want to build their futures here. For some, that means making better use of family-owned properties to create new homes, allowing the next generation to remain in the neighbourhoods where they were raised and build on the roots they already have.

The North Shore Neighbourhood House redevelopment demonstrates what partnerships achieve when we come together and turn ideas into results. This project represents the largest investment in affordable and mid-market housing in our city in a generation, while also delivering much-needed community services through a new North Shore Neighbourhood House and creating new public spaces, including a future park.

We must build on this model and continue finding practical, innovative ways to deliver the housing our community needs in today's reality while making thoughtful use of our limited land. Because this isn't only a housing issue. It's an economic and community issue.

When nurses, teachers, childcare workers, first responders, service workers and people working in our local businesses cannot afford to live anywhere near where they work, employers struggle to attract and retain people.

Today, many workers in our city are spending more of their income and more of their lives commuting. They feel the impact personally, but our entire community does too.

And affordability does not end at the front door. It includes childcare that supports children's growth and development and allows parents to work, recreation that supports health, transportation choices that reduce costs, and reliable public services.

It means recognizing that our population is changing, and we must plan now for healthy aging and greater accessibility. A truly livable city is one where people can build a life here and remain here through every stage of life.

Housing and affordability are also closely connected to another daily concern: how safely and easily people can move around our city. Transportation affects time with family, access to jobs, the success of local businesses, and the independence of younger and older residents.

Progress requires commitment from individuals, businesses and all levels of government. We have made meaningful progress over the past four years, including the opening of Crosscut Bridge and the extension of the R2 RapidBus from Park Royal to Metrotown. But we know there is much more to do.

Locally, we will continue implementing our Mobility Strategy through safer crossings, walkable neighbourhoods, accessible sidewalks and connected mobility lanes that make it easier for people to walk, roll and cycle.

Expanding transportation choices makes it easier and safer for people to reach jobs, schools, parks, shops and services, while ensuring people and goods can move efficiently throughout our city.

These investments are solutions to the challenges we face today and an investment in our future, recognizing that how we move will change as we age and new technologies emerge.

As more people travel to the North Shore for work or pass through to other destinations, we feel the impacts. We must better manage regional traffic on local streets by continuing to work with neighbouring municipalities and regional partners.

This term, we will work to separate regional and local traffic where possible, improving neighbourhood safety and traffic calming, and advocating for east–west connections north of Highway 1 that could reduce peak-hour traffic through the City.

Regionally, we will continue advocating for full Bus Rapid Transit to the North Shore, sustainable funding for transit, and replacement of the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge. There is no single solution to the North Shore's transportation challenges. We need an integrated, reliable network that supports walking, cycling, and transit, while addressing critical road infrastructure needs.

A connected city also supports a strong local economy. Small businesses are at the heart of our neighbourhoods. They face real cost pressures, and we must continue working directly with business owners, the North Vancouver Chamber and our business improvement associations to reduce barriers, strengthen commercial areas and make it easier to do business.

In a compact city like ours, thoughtful city-building is also economic development. When residents can walk a few blocks to the services, restaurants and shops they need, businesses benefit from a connected and vibrant local customer base.

Over this term, we will advance the Lonsdale Great Street project in Central Lonsdale, shaping the heart of our city for the long term. This plan offers a thoughtful path to strengthen economic vitality, improve livability and create a place where people choose to spend time, rather than simply pass through.

Great streets create community, support businesses and shape how people experience their city, and we will continue to engage with residents and businesses as this work advances.

As we strengthen Central Lonsdale, we will move into the next phase of developing our emerging Health Innovation District, anchored around Lions Gate Hospital and an established network of health-related businesses.

Connecting healthcare, education, research and industry offers the potential to improve health outcomes, support healthy living and aging, attract talent and create good jobs. It also presents a major long-term economic opportunity in life sciences, one of the fastest-growing sectors of the provincial economy.

Our port and shipbuilding industry is another vital part of our local economy. As Canada increases its focus on defence, Arctic sovereignty, supply chain resilience and trade infrastructure, the strategic importance of our port and Seaspan's role in Canada's national shipbuilding strategy continue to grow.

This is an opportunity for the City and the North Shore to strengthen our position in maritime innovation, advanced manufacturing, logistics and national economic resilience—driving long-term growth, attracting investment and creating more high-value jobs.

We will continue championing those industries, while also supporting the strengths of our film, technology and creative sectors.

ICBC announced its intention to vacate its offices on Esplanade several years ago. While this represents a significant loss of public-sector jobs, it also creates an opportunity to reimagine this large parcel as a job-generating-mixed-use development, and consider how we might extend The Shipyards west along the waterfront.

I have long spoken publicly about a new hotel as one potential use, and I intend to continue that conversation with the new provincial government as soon as possible.

A thriving city also needs places where people belong. I have often described our city as everybody's front yard: parks, streets, recreation centres and the waterfront, all within easy reach of home. Not everyone has a private yard or a large home, but everyone deserves welcoming places to gather, play, celebrate, rest and connect.

The Harry Jerome Community Recreation Centre, Silver Harbour Seniors' Activity Centre and the wider Harry Jerome precinct reflect that commitment to people and community.

After years of debate, discussion and construction, I am proud that our 2022 Council got the job done. We will build on those investments by improving parks and public spaces and moving forward on delivering a new park next to the North Shore Neighbourhood House later this term and a major upgrade to Kings Mill Walk Park as part of the revitalization of the Harbourside Neighbourhood.

The Shipyards shows what building community can look like in practice. We transformed a former industrial brownfield into a vibrant public space that honours our shipbuilding history and is now considered one of the best public spaces in the region, serving as an important gathering place, economic driver and world-class destination.

But its success isn't simply measured by the number of people who visit. It is measured by the life that happens there every day—families skating in the winter, children playing in the summer, people strolling the Pier, neighbours meeting one another, and residents and visitors supporting local businesses and cultural events. And there is more to come for our waterfront.

Residents tell me how much they value being close to the water—and how much they want more opportunities to enjoy it.

That is why the Harbour Swimming Deck matters. Building on the success of The Shipyards, it is about more than recreation. It is about reconnecting people with Burrard Inlet, one of our greatest natural assets, and creating another welcoming, accessible place to experience the water firsthand. That connection can also deepen our shared commitment to protecting it.

As our city grows, I want us to hold on to a simple principle: our waterfront belongs to everyone. The best public places do more than draw visitors. They bring neighbours together, strengthen community life and leave something lasting for generations to come.

As we invest in these places, we must also care for the natural environment that sustain us. Protecting and expanding our urban forest, strengthening climate resilience and preparing for hotter summers and more intense rainfall are essential responsibilities.

So is listening to residents about how our city grows and how we protect the qualities that make it special. None of this happens without sound financial stewardship. Residents rightly expect us to deliver reliable services, maintain our infrastructure, make responsible financial decisions and be transparent about the choices we make.

We have worked hard to build a strong financial foundation through long-term planning, asset management, improved reporting, updated reserve and investment policies, and a practice of securing external funding—and we will continue to strengthen this foundation. This discipline allows us to invest in our city's future while keeping affordability for taxpayers firmly in view.

We cannot, however, meet every challenge alone.

Over the years, we have built strong and productive relationships with First Nations, neighbouring municipalities, senior governments, community organizations, businesses and residents.

These partnerships have been central to our progress and will be just as important to our future. With a new provincial government and new federal representation, I have already begun conversations about our shared priorities: building a strong and resilient economy, delivering the housing and transportation options people need, and ensuring local governments have the support and resources necessary to invest in essential infrastructure.

I look forward to strengthening these relationships and continuing to work together to deliver for the people we serve. Just as important is how we work together around this Council table. We will not agree on every issue, nor should we.

Different perspectives, respectful debate and evidence-based decisions are essential to good governance. Our responsibility is to approach each decision with integrity, openness and a commitment to the whole community.

North Vancouver is home. It is where I grew up, raised my family and learned what it means to belong to a community. I believe deeply in this city because I have seen what people here can accomplish together. We have created places that bring us closer, made choices that reach beyond an election cycle and opened opportunities for the generations who follow.

Our responsibility is to be good stewards of what we have inherited—and to leave this city stronger for those who come next.

I want children growing up here today to feel the same sense of belonging I felt. I want young adults, to see a future for themselves here; families to find the support they need; older residents to remain connected and independent; and local businesses to see opportunity ahead.

The next four years will bring difficult decisions and tremendous possibilities. We will meet both by getting the fundamentals right, keeping people at the centre of our decisions and planning not just for today, but for generations.

As we begin this new term, I want to thank once again everyone who put their name forward for public office, and every resident who participated in our democratic process. I invite every resident to get engaged.

To my Council colleagues, I look forward to the work ahead and to what we can accomplish together. To our City staff, community partners, volunteers and residents, thank you for the many ways you contribute to making North Vancouver the community we are so proud to call home.

It is an extraordinary privilege to serve this city, and one I never take for granted. Together, we will continue building a city where everyone has a place to call home, where opportunity is shared, and where people of every generation can belong and thrive.

I am excited for the work ahead.

Thank you.