CITY OF PORT COQUITLAM
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Inaugural Address - November 9, 2026
Mayor West

- Good evening, everyone.

- Members of Council, distinguished guests, City staff, friends, neighbours, and my fellow residents of Port Coquitlam.

- Thank you for being here this evening.

- It is an extraordinary honour to stand before you as I begin my third term as Mayor of Port Coquitlam.

- I approach this responsibility with humility, seriousness, and the utmost respect for the trust the people of this community have placed in me.

- I believe that trust between elected representatives and the people they serve must never be taken for granted.

- It must be earned.Not just on election day, but every day that follows.

- And I give you my word that I will work each and every day to be worthy of your continued confidence and support.

- Having the opportunity to serve as Mayor of the city I grew up in, the city I love, and the city where Blaire and I are raising our two boys means more to me than words can convey.

- Port Coquitlam is more than a place on a map.

- It's our home.

- It's where we raise our families, build our friendships, start our businesses, and make our memories.

- It's where our children learn to ride their bikes, put on their first hockey jerseys, and begin to discover who they are and who they might become.

- And it's where generations of people have worked hard, looked out for their neighbours, and built a community we are all fortunate to call home.

- Tonight, as we begin a new chapter in our city's history, I want to reflect on what we've accomplished together, the challenges and opportunities ahead, and the responsibility we share to build an even better future for Port Coquitlam.

- A few weeks ago, the people of Port Coquitlam went to the polls.

- And I want to begin by thanking everyone who participated in our democratic process.

- Whether you voted for me or someone else, volunteered on a campaign, put your name forward as a candidate, or simply took the time to cast your ballot, you helped strengthen our democracy.

- Throughout the campaign, I had the opportunity to hear directly from people all across Port Coquitlam.

- On doorsteps, at hockey rinks, in our parks, at community events, and in conversations on the street.
- People shared their concerns, their frustrations, their hopes, and their ideas.

- And while those conversations covered many different issues, I believe there was a common message running through them.

- People want a government that is focused on what matters in their daily lives.

- They want a government that understands the pressures families are facing, respects the hard-earned money taxpayers contribute, and takes seriously its responsibility to deliver the services

people depend on.

- They want safe neighbourhoods. Good roads. Well-maintained parks. Quality recreation facilities. A community where their children can grow up and where their parents can grow old.

- They want a government that listens, works hard, tells them the truth, and delivers results.

- Not political theatre. Not endless excuses. Not promises that sound impressive but never become reality.

- They want competence. They want accountability. And they want results.

- That has been our approach to public service, and I believe the people of Port Coquitlam have spoken clearly about their desire for us to continue that work.

- And that is exactly what we intend to do.
- But continuing our work does not mean standing still.

- It means building upon the tremendous progress we've made, confronting new challenges, and never losing our determination to make Port Coquitlam an even better place to live.

- And as we look toward the future, I think there is something important we can learn from our past.

- In 1913, a group of people looked at the community they called home and imagined something more.

- They had a vision for a new city and for what Port Coquitlam could become.

- Now, the easy decision might have been to remain part of Coquitlam.

- And I say that with all due respect to our neighbours in Coquitlam!

- But the people who founded Port Coquitlam believed in the future of this community.

- And they were prepared to work for it.

- The years that followed were anything but easy.

- Just seven years after incorporation, a devastating fire swept through much of our downtown.

- Businesses were destroyed. Livelihoods were lost. The future of this young city was thrown into uncertainty.
- And the very next year, the Coquitlam River flooded, bringing further destruction to a community already

struggling to recover.

- Imagine what it must have felt like to be one of those families.

- To have worked so hard to build a home, establish a business, and create a better life, only to see so much of it threatened or swept away.

- But the people of Port Coquitlam did not give up.

- They rebuilt.

- They persevered.

- They refused to allow the challenges of the moment to determine the future of their community.

- And that, to me, is the true story of Port Coquitlam.

- The people who founded this city didn't have the luxury of knowing how the story would turn out.

- They simply believed in what Port Coquitlam could become, and they were prepared to do the work to make it happen.

- More than a century later, that responsibility now belongs to us.

- That spirit of determination and perseverance is part of our city's identity.

- And perhaps no one has demonstrated it more powerfully than our hometown hero, Terry Fox.

- A young man from Port Coquitlam who refused to allow extraordinary adversity to extinguish his determination to make a difference.

- Terry showed the world what courage, compassion, and an unwavering belief in something bigger than ourselves can accomplish.

- And while his example was extraordinary, I see that same spirit reflected in the everyday lives of people throughout our community.

- People who get up each morning, work hard, care for their families, help their neighbours, and do their part to make tomorrow a little better than today.

- That is the character of Port Coquitlam.

- And it is something worth fighting for.

- When I look back over the past eight years, I am enormously proud of what this Council, our City staff, and our community have accomplished together.

- We have demonstrated that responsible financial management and excellent public services are not competing objectives.

- They can, and they must, go hand in hand.
- Today, Port Coquitlam has the lowest average combined property taxes and utility fees of any municipality in Metro Vancouver and that did not happen by accident.

- It happened because we made fiscal responsibility a fundamental priority.

- Because we examine our budgets carefully, question expenditures, challenge assumptions, and recognize that every dollar we spend belongs to the people who worked hard to earn it.

- But for us keeping taxes affordable has never meant sacrificing the quality of our services or the investments needed to strengthen our city.

- In fact, we've demonstrated that it's possible to hold the line on costs while making significant investments in our community.

- We've invested in Gates Park, begun construction of our new Multi-Sport Facility, improved our roads and transportation infrastructure, strengthened flood protection, and expanded services like curbside glass

collection.

- We've invested in the things that make a real difference in people's lives, while remaining disciplined and responsible with their money.

- And I believe that is something we can all be proud of.

- But while budgets, infrastructure, and major projects are important, I've learned that sometimes the greatest impact of the decisions we make can be found in the smallest moments.

- I've had many special moments during my time as Mayor.

- But there's one conversation I come back to time and time again.

- I was leaving City Hall one day when a woman approached me.

- She explained that she was a single mom, raising a seven-year-old boy, and they were living in a suite in Mary Hill.

- She was working as hard as she could.

- Picking up every extra shift she could manage.

- Doing everything in her power to give her son a good life.

- But by the time she'd paid the rent, bought the groceries, and covered the necessities, there just wasn't much left.

- It was the end of September when we spoke.

- And she told me about the summer she and her son had just enjoyed.

- He had spent three or four days a week swimming at Robert Hope Pool.

- And then, they discovered Centennial Pool.

- She told me how much he loved it.
- The swimming. The splashing. The other kids he met. The excitement of waking up in the morning knowing he was going to spend another afternoon at the pool.

- She told me, with tears swelling in her eyes, that her little boy had just had the most wonderful summer and it was made possible because Council decided our outdoor pools would be free.

- And I felt a lot of emotion listening to her because as a parent, I knew that for her, it meant so much more

than swimming.

- She was doing everything she could to give her son the childhood he deserved.
- And here was something she could give him.
- Something that didn't cost her a dollar.
- A whole summer of fun. Of laughter. Of making friends and memories.
- And she got to sit there and watch her little boy experience the simple, wonderful joy of being seven years old.
- No worries about the rent. No worries about the bills. No worries about what they couldn't afford.
- Just a little boy, splashing around in a swimming pool, having the time of his life.
- And a mother, watching him, knowing that despite all the challenges she was facing, she had been able to give her son a summer he would remember.
- All because of a decision we made at City Hall.
- I have never forgotten that conversation.

- Because that is what I want us to remember.

- At the end of the day, the measure of our success isn't how many motions we pass, how many projects we announce, or how much money we spend.

- It's whether we're making life better for the people we serve.

- It's whether a family has a little more breathing room at the end of the month.

- Whether a senior feels secure in the home they've lived in for decades.

- Whether a child gets to enjoy the simple experiences that make growing up so special.

- And if we never lose sight of that, if we remember that behind every decision are real people, real families, and real lives, then I believe we'll continue to make Port Coquitlam a better place for everyone.

- Tonight is also an opportunity to look toward the future.

- Our region is growing. The cost of living is putting tremendous pressure on families. Our infrastructure is aging. Traffic congestion is affecting people's quality of life. And the demands being placed on local

government are greater than ever.

- We cannot meet these challenges by pretending they don't exist.

- Nor can we meet them by abandoning the principles that have made Port Coquitlam successful.

- We must approach the next four years with ambition, discipline, and a clear understanding of what matters most.

- And our priorities will be clear.

- We will protect what makes Port Coquitlam affordable.

- We will invest in what makes it livable.

- And we will strengthen what makes it special.

- First and foremost, affordability and fiscal responsibility will remain the foundation of everything we do.

- We will protect the progress we've made in keeping taxes and utility fees affordable.

- We will continue to scrutinize expenditures, seek efficiencies, and ensure that residents receive

excellent value for their money.

- Because affordability is not an abstract economic concept.

- It's about whether people can afford to live in the community they love.
- It's about whether young families can make ends meet, whether seniors can remain in their homes, and whether people who work hard every day can enjoy a good quality of life.

- We take that responsibility seriously, we have placed it at the core of how we work and we will continue to do so.

- We will also continue investing in the facilities, infrastructure, and public spaces that make Port Coquitlam such a wonderful place to live.

- That means improving our parks, playgrounds, trails, sports fields, and recreation amenities.

- It means engaging with residents on the future expansion of Hyde Creek Recreation Centre so we can meet the growing demand for aquatics and recreation.

- It means maintaining our roads, strengthening drainage and flood protection systems, and investing

responsibly in the infrastructure our community depends on. As has become our mantra: Getting The Basics Right. Delivering on our municipal responsibilities that you send your tax dollars to city hall for. That is what will guide us.

- It also means tackling the traffic congestion that is affecting people's quality of life.

- We will seek, as an urgent priority, a fair agreement with the City of Coquitlam on the construction of the Fremont Connector to relieve the impact of regional growth that is impacting our community, and being felt most significantly in our northside neighbourhoods.
- We will also continue our work to revitalize our downtown, support local businesses, and create welcoming public spaces that bring people together.

- We are creating a downtown that is the beating heart of our community.

- Where longstanding businesses thrive alongside new ones.

- Where families gather in our public spaces.

- Where people can enjoy dinner on a sidewalk patio, listen to live music, or simply spend time together.

- A downtown that is welcoming, lively, safe, and unmistakably Port Coquitlam.

- And speaking of safety, we will continue working to ensure Port Coquitlam is a community where everyone can feel secure.

- Every resident deserves to feel safe walking through their neighbourhood, visiting a park, operating a business, or raising a family.

- We will continue supporting the work of our police, firefighters, bylaw officers, and emergency personnel.

- We will stand up for victims of crime, advocate for meaningful improvements to our justice and mental health systems, and do everything within our authority to protect the safety and well-being of our community.
- But perhaps most importantly, we will continue to strengthen the sense of community that makes Port Coquitlam unlike anywhere else in British Columbia.

- Because as our city grows and changes, we must never lose the strong sense of belonging that has defined this community for generations.

- It's the bond that keeps lifelong residents here, and the spirit that makes those who are new to our city feel like they've finally found home.

- Growth and change are inevitable.
- But losing what makes our community special is not.
- Because what makes Port Coquitlam special isn't simply our buildings, our parks, or our recreation facilities.
- It's our people.
- And protecting that sense of belonging will remain one of our most important responsibilities.
- I want to take a moment to recognize some of the people who make this work possible.
- To my colleagues on City Council, I want to express my sincere appreciation and congratulations.
- Over the years, we've worked together, debated difficult issues, challenged one another, and shared more than a few laughs along the way.
- And I believe we've made one another better.
- Each of you brings your own experience, judgment, and commitment to this work, and our community is stronger because of it.

- I also want to recognize your families, who make sacrifices that are not always visible to the public.

- I'm proud of what we've accomplished together, and excited about what lies ahead.

- To our City staff, I want to express my sincere appreciation.

- No matter your role at the City, you are the people who turn the decisions made at Council into results felt by our residents.

- Our city has distinguished itself in so many positive ways.

- We punch well above our weight, and that is in large part because of your efforts.

- I want you to know how much I value and appreciate what you do every single day for the people of this great community.

- I'm proud of the organization we have built, and I look forward to what we will accomplish together over the next four years.

- And finally, to my family. My mom Kelly, Step-dad Brian, sister Brittney, brother-in-law Chris and niece Emerson who are all here tonight – thank you for all

the love and support.

- Blaire, thank you. You are most incredible, kind, good-hearted person I've ever met.

- Thank you for your love, your patience, and your unwavering support.

- Public service asks a great deal of the people we love, and no one understands that better than you.

- I'm incredibly proud of you, not only for everything you do for our family, but for your own commitment to serving this community.

- Our boys are so incredibly lucky to call you mom, and I am so lucky to live this life by your side.

- And to Liam and Owen.

- Owen is here tonight.

- Liam is at lacrosse.

- He told me, "Dad, I've already heard all your speeches."

- My two boys are the greatest joy of my life.

- One of the things I love most about being Mayor is getting to see Port Coquitlam through their eyes.

- At the hockey rink. At the lacrosse box. At the playground. Walking through our neighbourhoods.
- You boys remind me every day why this work matters.

- Because when I think about the future of Port Coquitlam, I think about the kind of community I want you to inherit.

- And the kind of community every child growing up here deserves.

- I've lived in Port Coquitlam my entire life.

- I've watched this city grow and change. I've seen what we can accomplish when we work together. And I've come to understand that the greatest thing about this community isn't something you can find on a map, or measure in a budget, or build out of bricks and mortar.

- It's the people who call it home.

- And that is why, despite the challenges ahead, I have never been more optimistic about our future.

- Because I know the character of this community.

- I know its generosity.

- I know its resilience.

- I know its determination.

- And I know that when we set our minds to something, when we work together, and when we stay focused on what matters, there is very little we cannot accomplish.
- There is a tendency in politics to talk about the future as though it is something that simply happens to us.

- Something we wait for.

- Something we hope will turn out well.

- But the future of Port Coquitlam is not something that will be decided for us.

- It is something we have the responsibility, and the opportunity, to build together.

- And now it's our turn.

- Our turn to carry forward what others began.

- Our turn to meet the challenges of our time with the same courage, determination, and belief in this community that has characterized Port Coquitlam

from its earliest days.

- Our turn to build a city worthy of the generations who will come after us.

- And when I think about those generations, I think about Liam and Owen.

- I think about that little boy who spent his summer swimming at Robert Hope Pool.

- I think about all the children growing up in Port Coquitlam today, and all the children who haven't even been born yet.
- One day, they will be the ones walking these streets, raising their families, building their businesses, and shaping the future of this community.

- And when that day comes, I hope they will look around and see a city that is safe, welcoming, affordable, and full of opportunity.

- A city where people still know their neighbours.

- Where hard work is respected.

- Where families can build good lives.

- Where every child, regardless of their circumstances, has the opportunity to experience the simple joys of

childhood and grow up believing that their future is full of possibility.

- And above all, I hope they inherit a city where that extraordinary sense of community, passed down from one generation to the next, remains as strong as ever.

- Because the true measure of what we accomplish will not simply be what we build during our time here.

- It will be what we leave behind.

- And if, years from now, the next generation can look back and say that we cared for this city, that we worked hard, that we made life better for the people who call it home, and that we left Port Coquitlam a little better than we found it...

- Then we will have done our job.
- That is the responsibility we have been entrusted with.

- That is the opportunity before us.

- And that is the promise we renew to the people of Port Coquitlam.

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