



SOUNDING BOARD



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Vancouver Mayor Ken Sim delivers first State of the City Address

VANCOUVER | Charting a path forward

More than 700 business leaders turned out to hear Mayor Ken Sim deliver his first State of the City Address to the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, his first major address to the business community since taking office on November 7.

In a wide-ranging speech that touched on “awakening the giants of Vancouver industry” and creating a “buzz” around Vancouver, the newly elected mayor laid out his vision for his ABC-majority council over the next four years.

‘Envisioning a vibrant city’ was one of the key themes projected on the screens that framed the stage while Mayor Sim spoke to the challenges that downtown businesses have been facing



in recent years. The COVID-19 pandemic reduced foot traffic as hybrid work became more common and health measures necessitated a temporary halt to in-person dining.

Evoking the landmark Expo 86

and 2010 Winter and Paralympic Winter Games, Mayor Sim reiterated that he wants to bring the “swagger” back to Vancouver and elevate the region on the world stage. With a nod to the upcoming 2026 FIFA World Cup,

he highlighted the role of events that bring international attention to the region while also attracting a significant number of tourists.

Dovetailing on the theme of a vibrant city, the address also touched on building a strong local economy. In a moment of wry humour, the mayor quipped: “I’m a big believer that our biggest problems actually represent our biggest opportunities in disguise, and let’s just say we have a lot of big opportunities.” His address ended with a call to action, “when you travel to another place, do us a favour here. Let people know Vancouver is open for business again.”

Following his address, Mayor Sim sat down with Greater Vancouver Board of Trade President and CEO Bridgitte Anderson, for

a Q&A session informed by questions from the audience. When asked when voters could expect to see tangible change on some of the issues he had campaigned on, the mayor stated that “we have set in a motion the foundation for change”, while emphasizing that many of the challenges facing the city are complex and require a regional approach.

The mayor’s address and subsequent conversation reflected the themes of his campaign. Tackling housing affordability, public safety and making Vancouver a place where people can easily open a business. Coupled with pledges to axe the 25-cent disposable cup fee and reduce red tape, his address laid out a broad range of priorities for City Hall as they look ahead to 2023. SB

DEVELOPMENT | The Future of False Creek Flats

Growth and Innovation

Vancouver’s False Creek Flats are a mixed-use area poised for significant growth and development in the coming years. The region has a rich history, serving as an export and manufacturing hub for almost 100 years, but it is now being reimagined as a vibrant and dynamic community for residents and businesses alike. Greater Vancouver Board of Trade President and CEO Bridgitte Anderson interviewed a number of local leaders on the future of the Flats in a recent series on GVPOD – Greater Vancouver’s business podcast. Their insights and predictions painted a picture of a neighbourhood in transition, one with exciting opportunities to address the challenges facing our region.

Science World CEO Tracy Redies

The first episode of the series featured Science World CEO Tracy Redies discussing the role of Science World in the future of False Creek Flats. The area is rapidly

evolving into a thriving technology and innovation cluster, and Science World is developing the STEAM talent that will grow and innovate the sector in years to come. The podcast highlights Tracy’s vision behind joining Science World, the future of STEAM talent in our province, the construction of St. Paul’s Hospital and what it means for our region.

Providence Health Care President and Chief Executive Officer Fiona Dalton

The new St. Paul’s is already having a transformational effect on the Flats. Providence Health Care President and CEO Fiona Dalton highlighted the incredible size of the project, one of the largest construction efforts in the history of the province and the increased capacity of the new facility. Slated to open in 2027, the new St. Paul’s is at the core of the Flats, and it will bring significant employment and economic activity to an area that has historically served a more



industrial purpose.

Low Tide Properties Vice President of Asset Management and Development Adam Mitchell and PCI Developments Senior Vice President Jarvis Rouillard

The new St. Paul’s is just one of the many exciting projects that call the Flats home. Low Tide Properties and PCI Developments partnered on a series of projects along Great Northern Way that have significantly contributed to the existing stock of life sciences

lab space in Vancouver, and they see more opportunity around the corner. With the proximity to the new St. Paul’s, the Flats will continue to attract more companies that operate in the healthcare and life sciences sectors in the years to come.

Vancouver Economic Commission CEO Eleena Marley

The final episode in the series served as a broad overview of the latent opportunity the Flats presents. The Vancouver Economic

Commission sees the region as a significant solution to the chronic shortage of industrial land in Metro Vancouver, particularly with its proximity to the Port of Vancouver, rail connections and the downtown core.

The False Creek Flats have always been a crucial driver of the local economy, and their role as an employment and innovation hub will be critical going forward. For the full interviews, subscribe to GVPOD, available on every podcast subscription platform. SB

A path to prosperity: Solving B.C.'s Workforce Challenges

ADVOCACY | Making Vancouver the Best Region to Live and Do Work

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade has put forward a comprehensive new report, outlining steps to ensure British Columbia has the talent required to capitalize on economic opportunities both today and in years to come.

Solving B.C.'s Workforce Gap is the result of months of research and ongoing conversations with over 5,000 members, education institutions, government, and community partners. The report provides a clear picture of the labour market outlook, detailing the job openings and skill gaps that will need to be addressed in the coming decade. The report is a must-read for the Greater Vancouver business community, providing critical insights and recommendations to help ensure the region remains competitive in the years to come.

The report breaks down recommendations into three key areas: immediate action, digital first, and reshaping how we generate talent. Each section articulates the challenge at hand and lays out a series of actionable policy recommendations to meaningfully address the problem.

Immediate Action

As short-term labour market challenges continue to negatively impact businesses, maximizing labour force participation here in B.C. will be imperative. By making sure the labour market

is equitable and accessible to all, B.C. can become a place where the skills and talents of all residents are fully utilized, and everyone feels welcome and included in the workplace.

Immediate steps should include accelerating the inclusion of newcomers, people with disabilities, Indigenous peoples and other groups that have historically been marginalized or barred from fully participating in civic life. While this will help rectify current business challenges, diverse workplaces also lead to more productivity and innovation by making the full use of individuals' strengths and talents.

Digital First

Few jobs have escaped the reach of digitalization. From agriculture to engineering, digital tools have assumed a core role in the way people work. Computer literacy is a prerequisite for nearly every job in our economy, while platforms and applications tailored to specific industries and job functions are proliferating. It is a time of explosive new technologies and programs evolving at a rapid rate. In the next 5-10 years, B.C. must develop the digital skills and competencies that will be required to succeed in a global marketplace.

Unlike the ubiquity of the internet, each sector will have their own specific needs in terms of digital skills and competencies.



In the same way tools like WordPress and Canva became synonymous with roles in web development, marketing and communications, future skills training will need to support careers in AI, the metaverse and quantum computing. Skills training programs and post-secondary education must evolve to serve the needs and interests of prospective and current students, recent graduates, and employers across all sectors.

Reshaping How We Generate Talent

To keep pace with the province's economic growth and meet

future projected job openings, B.C. will need a comprehensive roadmap to ensure British Columbians have information and training opportunities that align with job opportunities in the region. Solving the acute and ongoing labour gap will require innovative, multi-pronged solutions from all levels of government.

Fortunately, the region has a number of factors on our side, including a world class post-secondary system, and successful companies looking to fill vacancies with talented British Columbians. Government needs to be a catalyst, guiding British

Columbians into skills training and career opportunities that both meet the future workforce needs of the province and help British Columbians reach their full potential.

Each section of the reports provides governments of all stripes with insights gleaned from the broader business community and industry stakeholders. This is a transformational period in the evolution of the global economy and B.C. has an opportunity to be at the forefront of that transition. **SB**

Read the full report at boardoftrade.com/advocacy.

EVENTS | Upcoming Events in February

Upcoming Event Schedule

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade is hosting a series of dynamic business events this month. Join us to connect with industry leaders, learn from experts and expand your professional network.

BC Hydro's electrification plan: A clean future powered by water – Tuesday, Feb. 7

Discover how BC Hydro, led by President and CEO Chris O'Riley, is driving the province toward a sustainable future. Learn about their plan for the widespread adoption of clean electricity and hear about steps they are taking to support the transition away from fossil fuels. Join us for an

informative look at how BC Hydro is helping combat climate change.

Unlocking Vancouver's Destination Competitiveness – Thursday, Feb. 16

Vancouver is a global destination, but there is also stiff competition for international tourism dollars. Destination Vancouver President and CEO Royce Chwin will delve into the city's visitor economy and what makes Vancouver so attractive to visitors from around the world. This event will also unpack the challenges that could impact our success and the steps we need to take to build a sustainable

and innovative visitor economy. Register now for this informative event and be part of shaping the future of tourism in Vancouver.

Snowshoeing at Mount Seymour – Wednesday, Feb. 22

Expand your network in the great outdoors with fellow members of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade and the North Vancouver Chamber for a unique networking opportunity on the trails of Mount Seymour. Experience the beautiful mountain at twilight on a guided snowshoe tour, followed by a gathering in the Earl Petch Room to relax, connect and build relationships. Famous for offering terrain to challenge beginners and experts alike, Mount Seymour



is independent and dedicated to providing an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere for all. Register now for this exclusive Members' Experience and take advantage of this opportunity to network and explore the

beautiful mountain on the unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples. **SB**

Tickets to all of our upcoming events are available at boardoftrade.com/events.