

Mayor Gregor Robertson speech to the Vancouver Board of Trade

Sept 30, 2009

Check against delivery

Thank you _____ and good afternoon. (Intro councillors)

I want to thank Bombardier Canada for sponsoring this lunch today. Bombardier, as some of you know, is providing streetcars for Vancouver from January through March of next year, as part of a demonstration streetcar line that will link the Olympic Village with Granville Island. Exciting stuff.

In just over 4 months Vancouver will welcome the world to our home. And in just over 6 months the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games will be over, and most of the visitors will have returned to their homes. What happens next?

One of the key issues we've been working on at City Hall since being elected less than a year ago is an economic development strategy to ensure that when our visitors head home, at least some of them come back.

And when they come back, we want them to bring their companies and investment and we want them to stay for good.

That statement isn't exactly groundbreaking. That's what politicians have been saying about the Games since Vancouver won the bid. It's what every city that hosts the Olympics aspires to.

So we've taken action this year to ensure that City Hall is focused on the 2010 opportunity and thinking beyond our borders for economic development. This is truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in the world spotlight and we must capture our moment. Today I will share the work that we're doing to prepare for this.

Before I get into the specifics, I want to spend a few minutes talking about the global context.

Economies around the world are increasingly interdependent. Things happen faster than ever, for good and for bad. We've seen this all too clearly in the past two years as the economic downturn swept across the globe.

The Information Age is here and rapidly evolving. It's burgeoning array of creative and knowledge-based sectors are mobile, highly competitive, and rely on smart, creative people to thrive. We're seeing it take hold right here in Vancouver, where over 1/3 of our jobs are now in these industries.

The Information Age is booming at the same time that we are facing daunting environmental realities. Climate change, peak oil and resource depletion, land and marine ecosystems collapsing.

The convergence of technology, sustainable values, and environment has catalyzed the fastest growing industries on the planet, collectively known as the green economy.

The green economy isn't just a new investment bubble to replace the housing bubble that started the current recession, or the internet bubble that preceded that.

It's a seismic shift to a more efficient and sustainable economy that employs our best innovation and technology to solve our toughest challenges. It couldn't come at a better time.

Our grandchildren's future depends on this new green economy succeeding, and every one of us making sure that people, planet and profit are all part of the bottom line.

Across the world, people are getting it, and demanding change. The market is responding. Where the market goes, the business world is in hot pursuit.

World-wide, financing for clean energy surpassed fossil fuels in 2008 - \$155 billion was invested. The global clean energy market is massive and growing – forecast to be \$350 billion by 2020.

Globally, the UN estimates already 2.3 million people are employed in renewable energy sector. In Germany, the renewable sector now employs more than 250,000 people.

In the land of VW, BMW and Audi, renewables are expected to provide more jobs than the country's auto industry. Since 2005 in CA green jobs have grown at a rate ten times faster than total job growth.

According to UNEP, investments in energy efficiency in buildings could generate an additional 2 - 3.5 million green jobs in Europe and the United States alone.

Even governments are catching on. We've seen major investments in the US that far outweigh anything in Canada. Just one of the recent US federal stimulus bills alone

invested \$100 billion in clean energy.

China is going for it in a massive way, investing somewhere between \$440-660 Billion over next 10 years. They now employ 600,000 people installing solar hot-water heaters. China's electric bicycle business is worth more than \$6bn a year. Just 1% of that would fill the city's budget gap next year

The rate of change and the scale of these numbers is staggering. Bottom line? The global economy is fast becoming a green economy.

Sustainable business practices benefit both emerging and established industries and nobody wants to be left behind as the bar is raised.

Cleaner, more efficient forms of energy. Low carbon transportation. Advances in life sciences that help us live longer and healthier lives. Technology to manage energy, improve utilization of resources, and reduce and manage waste.

These are businesses that are growing, that reduce the impact on our environment, and bring with them an educated workforce and an extraordinary array of spin-off benefits. **And we would love** more of them to set up shop here in Vancouver, create jobs and bolster our economy.

But you know what? So would **every** other major city in the world.

And we can't expect that just because we have the 2010 Games, businesses looking for a new home will see us on TV, or during a quick trip here during the Games and say, "that's the place for our next billion dollar investment."

I look at it this way: we don't expect that simply because the Games are in Canada our athletes are going to win gold in every sport. No, if anything, Canadian Olympians are training and working harder than ever because they have even more to prove to the world with the Games here on home turf.

So why would we expect that with the Olympics coming, we can simply sit back and wait for the phone to ring with businesses asking how they can set up shop here?

As a City, and as a region, we need a more robust strategy than simply being the host to the world. We need to aggressively pursue business development opportunities that are a good fit with Vancouver.

I know some work has gone into this at various agencies and levels of government, but what's been missing is a strong, coordinated effort from City Hall, in partnership with the business community.

I'm here today to say **let's kick into gear**.

Let's look at all this from 30,000 feet.

Global economy still in turmoil, but huge growth in the green economy. Vancouver economy struggling but about to host the world for unprecedented marketing opportunity.

Vancouver already an emerging hotspot for the green economy, but very quiet about it.

City leaders are ready to crank into gear. Are you?

So what are the crucial next steps to success?

We need to change the way people view Vancouver. Let's face it. Vancouver sometimes suffers from the perception that we're all laid back, we play harder than we work, and the heavy lifting gets done elsewhere.

And frankly, some of those misconceptions have been earned over the years. The statistics bear it out:

Last place in exports for cities in Canada. Lagging GDP.

It's time to change that. It's time to show the world what Vancouver's true potential is. Let's be loud and clear about our strengths and our goals. Let's blow them all away.

Take our rapidly growing clean-tech industry. Vancouver has the potential to be a top five global clean-tech city, with a world-leading cluster of clean-tech innovation, jobs and investment.

BC's clean energy tech sector is recognized globally and has the potential to reach \$5-6 billion by 2020. It's now the fastest growing tech sector in BC.

Our city is home to some of the most cutting-edge firms in the world in the green economy, who are capitalizing on the opportunities that are emerging from the increasing demands for efficiency and innovation.

We've got Nexterra, who develop and manufacture advanced gasification systems to generate lo-cost heat and power.

Westport Innovations calls Vancouver home, making advanced natural gas engines and selling their vehicles all over the world.

Hemmera specializes in environmental assessments and site remediation, and is a world-class firm that's part of our resource and mining cluster.

We just got news that Pulse Energy will be moving their headquarters into Vancouver. Pulse Energy helps reduce energy use in existing buildings by up to 25% with cutting edge new technology.

The list is long and growing. Ballard. Sempa Power. HB Lanarc. We're home to some major players in the industry, yet we haven't connected these businesses to our brand, our global image.

It doesn't stop with the green industries. We're home to some potent global brands in their respective industries, that are all striving to green the way they do business. Electronic Arts. Rainmaker. Novex Couriers. Mountain Equipment Co-op. Lululemon.

The combination of a livable, green city and our extraordinary community of talent is now drawing companies like Pixar, Microsoft and Google into the mix, looking for a base here.

Attracting and growing these iconic companies creates enormous benefits for every other sector. We have an abundance of entrepreneurs in Vancouver.

Just look at the make up of the Board of Trade membership. 80% of the existing membership companies are made up of employees of 50 or less.

Vancouver is a powerhouse of small business and entrepreneurs. And it's these companies that really get green. They adopt early and are in tune with the customer.

They understand the positive impact that being green can have on their top and bottom lines. They get it that being green is really about being efficient and being smart.

Our strengths don't stop there. We have a highly educated and diverse workforce. We have relatively low taxation coupled with a high level of quality services. Our infrastructure is in relatively good shape. We're blessed with stellar education and research facilities.

All of these strengths place us among the world's leading cities, but dozens of great cities can also claim these same attributes.

So what will be the secret of our future success? What makes us stand out? What **really differentiates** us from the competition? It's our Green credibility.

As most of you probably know, I was in business before I went into politics about five years ago. And working hard with my partners and dedicated employees, we built a pretty successful business at Happy Planet.

Happy Planet is a success because it tapped into a growing market, but would it have been a success if it hadn't been branded properly? We knew the juice we were making was great. And we knew there was an appetite for it, but would it have been successful if we'd just called it "Joe's Juice"?

When I was first elected Mayor I looked around City Hall to see what brand strategy there was for Vancouver going into

2010. More specifically, with a business brand that would resonate for a global audience.

Any marketing expert will tell you, if you don't brand yourself or your product effectively, you're limiting your own success. But a brand has to be more than just a slogan, or an eye-catching graphic design—though both of those are important to for an effective brand strategy.

For branding to be successful, it has to be authentic. The story we tell the world must ring true.

So again I come back to what our inherent strengths are, and what the world perceives us to be. The world certainly sees Vancouver as a green Mecca. Our 'green-ness' is key to our collective identity here - we live in a green paradise and this inspires us to protect the livability of our home.

And as I just outlined, we are an emerging force in the green economy, attracting entrepreneurs and innovators. We've also produced some of the planet's most storied environmental groups and exported their work around the world.

We are surrounded by jaw-dropping natural beauty. We're building a city that is transit, pedestrian, and bicycle friendly. We're working to be leaders on electric vehicles.

We have a downtown residential core that is the envy of most, we have pristine protected watersheds that give us the finest drinking water in the world. We have our Agriculture Land Reserve, to ensure our precious farmland is protected. We are quietly among the greenest cities in the world.

Green is about far more than the environment. Green is social sustainability and the local economy as well. It's the many Vancouver enterprises from the small cafe to the auto repair shop to the insurance agency, the real estate sales firm, the dentist office, the art gallery, the corner store, and the animation, film, digital industries.

Let there be no mistake. Green is also good for the mining sector, forest products, ports, financial services. Its good for everyone.

Let's make it our market advantage. Let's claim what is rightfully ours and make sure the world knows it.

Let's **own** green. **Enough** of the modesty. Right now, we're letting the rest of the world define us – **or not**. We aren't being proactive about it.

The 2010 Games are a phenomenal chance to say yes, we are green – and here's what we mean by green.
We mean business.

I spoke to you in March of this year, three months into my term. I said very clearly that as Mayor I would make sure we capitalized on the opportunity the Olympics will bring for our local economy.

Since then, the City has taken the following seven actions:

First, we've created a positive, clear and consistent business brand for our city that we can market to the world. Over the past several months, my office put together a team of business development experts and the Vancouver Economic Development Commission to develop a branding strategy for the city. Here's the result...

Our business brand is **Vancouver Green Capital**

Complementing our brand, our branding strategy incorporates local success stories. It's about who we are. When we put Vancouver's name out there in the world, we will do it with Vancouver people and businesses.

Green Capital demonstrates for the world media, companies, investors and Vancouverites that we mean business, *but not business as usual*.

We're going to lead by example and set the pace.

Every single business is part of this. Every business needs more efficiency, less waste and a better city for their employees and families to live in.

Green Capital says that we are engaged and there's no going back – the green economy is on the front burner.

Second, the Vancouver Economic Development Commission will be releasing its economic development strategy in November. I'm pleased to announce that this is the first economic development strategy for the city in two decades.

The VEDC's plan builds on the assets and opportunities I've outlined today, and will make 10 key recommendations that will bolster smart and green economic activity.

Third, we're soon launching a very exciting initiative in Metro Vancouver Commerce, an unprecedented collaboration between local municipalities. Metro Vancouver Commerce will have local cities partnering together to target new businesses and market the region as a whole.

Green business will be a major target as we use the Olympic platform to implement the most aggressive business development program in the region's history.

It's based on the concept that many of you have argued for in the past, but has never been acted on: we want new jobs and head offices throughout Metro Vancouver, in Surrey, Richmond or New Westminster, wherever they are most likely to succeed and benefit the region.

As Mayor of Vancouver I will be promoting the region as a whole as I strongly believe that what's good for the Tri-cities, North Shore, Burnaby and our neighbouring cities in the region is good for us here in Vancouver.

Fourth, we'll be unveiling Vancouver House, which will showcase Vancouver Green Capital to the world during the 2010 Games. It will present the best and boldest of what Vancouver has to offer to a global audience.

Vancouver House is a key part of our Green Capital branding strategy and it will be shaped and targeted to bring more business to the City and to the region.

Fifth, later this month we'll be releasing our Action Plan to become the greenest city in the world by 2020. When implemented, these actions will create billions of dollars of economic activity locally, in energy efficiency, renewable energy and green infrastructure. They will also strengthen our status as the world's most livable city and green capital.

Sixth, we will be pursuing agreements with other sub-national governments to create Low Carbon Economic

Development Zones to spur green economic activity and create jobs.

The elements of these Zones include financing mechanisms, government incentives or regulations, technology exchange and green job training exchange.

If we want to foster long-term economic growth for our City and region, we need to be looking beyond our borders. That's why I have been in talks with the State of California and cities in the Pacific Northwest such as Portland to negotiate agreements that recognize the emerging economic opportunities in the green economy. It's our intention to enter into an agreement with California this year to pursue such a collaboration.

Seventh, and finally, as we head into the Games I'll be amplifying my role as Vancouver's "salesman in chief" as Fazil Mihlar of the Sun called me a few weeks ago.

Over the next number of months leading into the 2010 Games, and in the months that follow, I'm going to be on the road. A lot. And in addition to all the official duties as Mayor of the Host City, I'm not going to miss a single opportunity to promote Vancouver as the Green Capital.

My challenge to all of you as the business leaders of Vancouver is to join me. We all need to be partners in this vigorous effort to attract new business and investment to our city.

In the coming months we're going to ramp up our actions to truly market Vancouver and shine on the world stage. I invite you to partner in these initiatives and to share the leadership

that is required to make our City and our region a real winner.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today, and I look forward to your questions.