

Let me begin by saying thank you to everyone in this room tonight. We have people gathered here from every corner of the city. That means so much to me - and it means so much FOR London. THANK YOU.

Your support and your enthusiasm tonight, and throughout the first few months of this campaign, has been incredible. But I know, deep down, you didn't come here tonight just to support me. You came, because we share something in common -- you and I believe in what London can be. You believe that it's time for London to get back on top.

London is a city borne from hard work, from industriousness, from passion and from entrepreneurial spirit. It's the birthplace of giants - in business, education and healthcare. It's home to a thriving arts sector, world-class advanced manufacturers, a growing knowledge based economy and a not-for profit sector that lifts up our community's most vulnerable every day.

Now is the time to build on these strengths. To recognize that we aren't Waterloo or Toronto and we don't have to be. Now is the time to restore pride in this great community. Now is the time to move forward, TOGETHER.

A few weeks ago The London Free Press asked this question:

What kind of mayor does London need?

If we're going to get this right, the answer to that question must come from citizens, not politicians. And let me tell you - that answer has come through loud and clear.

Londoners tell me they want a mayor who leads with a collaborative approach, from WITHIN the community. Londoners tell me they want a leader who understands what it means to live, to work and to raise a family here. Someone who is committed to conducting the business of the city IN THE OPEN and in consultation with citizens. Someone who believes in a prosperous, sustainable, and affordable city... AND they want someone who has the PLAN to get us there.

Over the past 3 months, I've been meeting with business and nonprofit leaders, local entrepreneurs and many individual residents. Some of these people have lived and worked their whole lives here in London and some are just getting started. Their voice is united and it is unanimous -- London needs a mayor who can bring people together. A mayor who can help London build on its strengths. Someone who will shift the conversation from individual agendas, to effective community ACTION.

-PAUSE-

I'm here now, to commit to you tonight -- definitively, confidently and absolutely -- that I AM THAT LEADER.

[[[pause for applause and take a drink]]]

Allow me to share some of my vision for London.

The London of the not too distant future has left behind the politics and division of old. It moves forward

with focus and with purpose, together, not divided. It understands its strengths and trumpets them, far and wide.

The London of the not so distant future is a destination of choice that protects prosperity. By boosting business and building better neighbourhoods. By creating more efficient transportation and lifting up our most vulnerable. By promoting partnerships between business, our hospitals, our educational institutions, other community partners and other levels of Government.

London of the future will **welcome** and **wow the world**.

Most importantly, my vision recognizes that much of the work ahead has already been defined by all of you.

What we have to do now, as a community... is EXECUTE.

Over the last several years, we have invested in some truly impressive plans for the future: The Downtown Master Plan. The Transportation Master Plan. The work of the Age Friendly Task Force, The work of the Citizen Engagement Task Force, The work of the Strengthening Neighbourhood Task Force and most recently, ReThink London.

These planning processes are the very definition of what I mean when I say our community CAN DO BETTER, TOGETHER.

Developed by our talented city staff and in collaboration with Londoners from all walks of life, these plans lay out a vision for an exceptional community. The vision of a London where people stay -and thrive- for life.

Let's take ReThink London for an example. It was the largest citizen engagement process in London's history. More than ten-thousand Londoners participated. You shared your insights, your frustrations and your dreams for the future. You are the partners with which we are crafting the road map for an exceptional London ahead.

And you are the partners we need to move forward with to make it happen.

A good leader must be able to answer two basic questions: What do you plan to do AND how do you plan to do it?

My answer to those questions is straightforward, it's actionable and it's laid out into four key directions:

First, Better Government -- Second, A Strengthened Environment for Business and for Job Creation -- Third, An Attractive, Livable, Affordable Community and finally, Re-establishing the Public Trust to Lead this Change.

Let's begin with better government.

Municipal politics in London is broken. That's not negativity. That's a fact. A recent City of London survey told us that nearly 70% of Londoners are dissatisfied with the leadership of City Council. That isn't right and it's not acceptable.

Leading can't be "my way or the highway". It can't be an exercise in purposely dividing the team.

Let's be honest. When we're facing a jobs crisis, the last thing Londoners want to see is Council in-fighting. And I can tell you, as someone who has worked in the private, public and nonprofit sectors over the course of my career, I know that serious challenges cannot be swept away by empty promises.

What's stopped us from addressing our challenges is not the absence of sensible plans. What's stopped us is a failure of leadership. The result is petty politics -- the temptation to be distracted by loud voices, insignificant issues and personal agendas.

And here's the fundamental truth - the future of this community depends on Council's ability to come together, as a team, to make strategic, long term decisions. Right now, that's not happening.

This year's budget is a prime example.

A lack of leadership and a flawed process made for endless deliberation and poor decision making.

For four years, we've been borrowing from our community's future to pay for short-sighted promises. That means more pressure on future taxes, less of things important to us like road and sidewalk repair, and a reduced ability to invest in our economy. This is not good leadership and this is not good fiscal policy.

It's time to bring the focus back to accountability and responsible growth.

Strengthening the environment for business is one important way to do that.

It's no secret we're facing significant economic challenges. Our unemployment rate is 8% and our youth jobless rate is 17.4 percent. It's nearly 5 percent higher than the national average. And our economic base is shifting, quickly.

There is no question that we need to continue to play to our strengths in advanced manufacturing, agrifood processing, life sciences and medical innovation, and more, but we also need to focus on another important part of our economic engine -- our local entrepreneurs, start-ups and homegrown successes -- who will be a key piece of London's future prosperity.

It's time to get aggressive, to leverage the resources of other levels of government, the LEDC, the Small Business Centre, Tech Alliance and World Discoveries. It's time to create the conditions for London to be the start-up capital of Ontario. Nurturing our homegrown entrepreneurs and attracting new ones must be a priority.

You and I both know, when business owners don't have the support they need, the economy doesn't move forward. Businesses create fewer jobs. There are fewer opportunities for Londoners to support their families.

This isn't good enough and it's not what hard working Londoners deserve.

We don't need more empty rhetoric or more roundtables that are heavy on promises and short on deliverables. Now is the time for action.

And here's how I plan to deliver:

If you want to start a business or expand an existing one, the City should be there with you, every step of the way.

So today, I'm committing to the implementation of a Better Business Action Plan. My conversations with London's senior business leaders, professionals and entrepreneurs are helping to identify major barriers and as well as solutions. A focus on creating a culture of customer service and making sure the right people are in the right places throughout the process, is just the beginning.

I'll continue these consultations over the course of this campaign and I will make implementing this action plan priority one when I take office. Working together with business leaders, my council colleagues, the City Manager, and City staff, we'll change the way you do business with city hall and help businesses start and grow faster.

Because when business succeeds, our community thrives.

That's what you can expect from me. Better support for business and more opportunities for job creation. A vote for me is a vote for a stronger London economy.

That said, we all know economic success doesn't happen in isolation...that's why we need to focus on creating an attractive, green, livable, and affordable City.

Families thrive, businesses grow, and talent stays, in a vibrant community. London has much of what it needs to build that place. Beautiful neighbourhoods. World class facilities. A thriving arts and cultural scene. Willing and engaged citizens yearning to be proud of their City's accomplishments.

What we need now is a leader who can build on this foundation with a plan for an exciting, exceptional, and connected London.

That means an action plan for how we grow, how we green and how we move people. It also means an intentional focus on creating strong partnerships with our neighbours in this region.

This is how we make sure we give the people who are living, working and investing in this community the best possible quality of life, AND how we make London an attractive place for new businesses, new talent, and new families to call home.

A thriving, livable and affordable city is the cornerstone for economic success. It's how we attract and retain world-class talent to fill new knowledge jobs. London has struggled to retain the very young people who we need to drive our economy forward. With two world-class educational institutions right in our backyard, we can do better. And we will.

This is my commitment to executing on these plans:

We will take our investment in downtown revitalization to the next level. This means committing -- once and for all -- to things like moving the busses off Dundas Street. creating that “flexible street” and making a greater commitment to the arts and culture in the core.

We will move forward with plans for more progressive and active transportation, from bike lanes to the next generation of transit, AND we will ensure the roads that we use every day are safe, easy to travel and in good repair -- because we've got some of the best planners, engineers and city staff in Canada.

We will find a new, positive balance between sustaining a healthy community and ensuring economic growth, together with partners like the Chamber of Commerce, ReForest London, the Development Community and the Urban League.

We will invest in the safety and livability of our neighbourhoods -- the heart of our community -- in partnership with neighbourhood associations, and leaders like London Community Foundation, Pillar, Goodwill, United Way and many other pioneers of sustainable and inclusive communities.

We will commit to never leaving behind our community's most vulnerable. Fighting poverty and boosting literacy, promoting healthy active living in collaboration with our Child and Youth network partners.

We will endorse and support the work of groups like Emerging Leaders, GenNext and JCI who are helping to shape the very conditions under which talent will flourish in a competitive, prosperous London.

We will engage our regional neighbours in a concrete plan for shared prosperity in the Southwest. These partnerships will be rooted in action, focused on projects that can be implemented together right now and benefit all our communities well into the future.

This is what Londoners deserve and expect -- from the families and individuals who are the foundation of our community to the businesses that drive our economy.

And that's what you can expect from me. A firm commitment to delivering an attractive, sustainable and prosperous community, aligned with OUR COLLECTIVE vision for London. A vote for me is a vote for a strong, livable London.

Which brings me to my final, and most important, focus...

It's not enough to have a plan -- to set the conditions for good, stable jobs, to create a dynamic and attractive community, to create safe and vibrant neighbourhoods where families thrive. It's not enough if we don't have the trust of the public to lead this change.

It should be a given that elected officials have integrity, that elected officials follow the rules and that elected officials model behaviour that makes us confident, that makes us proud, that makes us hopeful, and that set a good example for our children. As a husband and father, As a teacher, a City Councillor and proud volunteer in this community, these are principles that I live by.

We are facing critical issues that our Council must be focused on solving. With your endorsement and with your trust.

So it's time to restore confidence, It's time to engage Londoners in the political process and to

demonstrate why we should all care about local government. As politicians, we need to earn that sacred trust that has been compromised by so many negative stories, by so many scandals and so many mis-starts. It's a privilege for elected officials to serve; to have the public's confidence, and as politicians it's our obligation to maintain that trust.

Integrity. Honesty. Hard work. Values to live by and to share. That's the commitment I make to my two sons each and every morning. That's the commitment I'm making now to all Londoners and to your children and to your grandchildren.

In particular, it's my commitment to those Londoners who are still living without jobs, without the security of a stable home, without the certainty of a warm meal. WE CAN - AND WE WILL - DO BETTER.

So, FOUR PRIORITIES: Better Government, Strengthening Business, creating an Attractive, Livable, Affordable City and Restoring Public Trust. This is my promise. This is what I will deliver.

This is my promise to lead the next chapter of London -- our legacy to our children and grandchildren. We'll leave them not only the values of a strong, inclusive community but also a strengthened economic engine and an improved quality of life. Stable, enviable jobs. Thriving culture. Active transportation networks. Beautiful green spaces where their own children will play.

This is my promise, to lead a plan that is ambitious, a plan that's achievable and a plan that's practical.

This is my promise to all residents, who expect a City that works and who deserve quality services, safe drinking water, efficient garbage pickup, clean parks and neighbourhoods and roads in good repair. To the business owner who expects excellent service, streamlined processes and the best possible environment to attract talent. To the next Dr. Oetker or Starlim North America, who want to optimize their operations and bring jobs to this community. To the budding entrepreneur watching London unfold from the steps of Western University or the doors of Fanshawe College, who's deciding, right now, whether or not to make London his or her home and the home base of the next Trudell Medical International, or Startech.com, or rTraction, or Trojan Technologies or Voices.com. To our young children who want to play in a safe green space , who ride their bikes on pathways and sidewalks in good condition, and whose families have access to the high quality programs and services their tax dollars support.

This is my promise to all of you.

This is a promise our community can stand by.

This is better, together.

And this is why I'm in this race. To be your next Mayor. To unite with you -- as I have in the past -- to work together -- to transform our city. I'm optimistic -- I'm hopeful -- I'm determined -- I'm ready to deliver on this promise, and I know you are too.

We Start Today!

Thank you