Webinar

ULI British Columbia: A Conversation with Mayor Kennedy Stewart

Date: March 24, 2021

00:00:00 --> 00:00:04: Yes, which is hilarious because it's Copyright infringement.
00:00:06 --> 00:00:10: Well, it's quite nice. I wanna welcome folks that are
00:00:10 --> 00:00:11: that are joining us.
00:00:11 --> 00:00:13: We're going to get started pretty quick here,
00:00:13 --> 00:00:16: but we'll just give a minute for people to trickle
00:00:16 --> 00:00:16: in.
00:00:16 --> 00:00:18: Want to welcome you all to another.
00:00:18 --> 00:00:21: You lie. You lie. British Columbia events here.
00:00:21 --> 00:00:24: We're excited for you to join us.
00:00:24 --> 00:00:27: I'll probably just give it another minute.
00:00:27 --> 00:00:28: Uhm?
00:00:34 --> 00:00:36: I see a few more people joined,
00:00:36 --> 00:00:38: so for those who are new to join and once
00:00:38 --> 00:00:42: again thank you for joining us today for another event
00:00:42 --> 00:00:44: with you like British Columbia,
00:00:44 --> 00:00:45: I think we'll get started.
00:00:45 --> 00:00:48: I'll just start off with some remarks as we as
00:00:48 --> 00:00:51: more people trickle in but very excited for you all
00:00:52 --> 00:00:54: to join us this week for another event.
00:00:54 --> 00:00:57: We are very pleased to be hosting the Mayor,
00:00:57 --> 00:01:01: Vancouver Kennedy Stewart cut for our regular keynote address from
00:01:01 --> 00:01:01: the.
00:01:01 --> 00:01:03: The mayor, we tell it to the past,
00:01:03 --> 00:01:04: think six or seven years.
00:01:04 --> 00:01:07: Now we see with two different mayors before we get
00:01:07 --> 00:01:08: started,
00:01:08 --> 00:01:10: I just want to of course.
00:01:10 --> 00:01:13: In addition to welcome everybody for those who may be

00:01:13 --> 00:01:14: new to you lie,
00:01:14 --> 00:01:18: you lie is a international education and research based nonprofit
00:01:18 --> 00:01:20: focused on best practices and city building.
00:01:20 --> 00:01:23: We've hosted a number of events in this new zoom
00:01:23 --> 00:01:25: environment throughout Kovid and lately,
00:01:25 --> 00:01:27: as some of you may have notice,
00:01:27 --> 00:01:30: we've been having a lot of conversations on post post
00:01:30 --> 00:01:32: post code and post recovery.
00:01:32 --> 00:01:36: Talking about housing policy, we're joined by a Parliamentary Secretary,
00:01:36 --> 00:01:37: Adam Bomb the other week.
00:01:37 --> 00:01:40: What it might mean for the future of the economy
00:01:40 --> 00:01:40: and policy.
00:01:40 --> 00:01:43: Here in in Canada, with the Minister of the Environment
00:01:43 --> 00:01:45: and now we want to bring in a bit look
00:01:45 --> 00:01:48: more local and talk about right in our backyard here
00:01:48 --> 00:01:50: in Vancouver. That's why we're very excited to have the
00:01:50 --> 00:01:53: mayor joins us to talk a bit about what's been
00:01:53 --> 00:01:55: happening for the last year as it relates to Covid.
00:01:55 --> 00:01:57: But also what the next few months may have in
00:01:57 --> 00:01:58: store.
00:01:58 --> 00:02:00: Well, months and years may have in store.
00:02:00 --> 00:02:02: As always, I want to thank all of our annual
00:02:02 --> 00:02:03: sponsors.
00:02:03 --> 00:02:05: You see a bunch of them up on the screen
00:02:05 --> 00:02:05: right now,
00:02:05 --> 00:02:07: and they're also online background here.
00:02:07 --> 00:02:10: It's with your continued support well over the years through
00:02:10 --> 00:02:11: the pandemic and.
00:02:11 --> 00:02:14: I post Pandemic that allows us to put on this
00:02:14 --> 00:02:15: programming and many more,
00:02:15 --> 00:02:18: so we want to thank you for your continued support
00:02:18 --> 00:02:21: and we look forward to working with you in the
00:02:21 --> 00:02:22: coming year.
00:02:22 --> 00:02:24: As we hopefully Shipap ship shifted back to some in
00:02:25 --> 00:02:26: person programming,
00:02:26 --> 00:02:29: although I'm not sure we'll ever leave the full zoom
00:02:29 --> 00:02:29: environment.
00:02:29 --> 00:02:32: I think it actually works quite well.
00:02:32 --> 00:02:34: So once again I want to welcome you all to
00:02:34 --> 00:02:36: this address with the mayor of Vancouver,
00:02:36 --> 00:02:39: Kennedy Stewart Mayor Stewart was elected in 2018.

00:02:39 --> 00:02:42: Prior to that, he should serve two terms.
00:02:42 --> 00:02:45: In as a Member of Parliament and in Burnaby for
00:02:45 --> 00:02:47: the New Democratic Party of Canada,
00:02:47 --> 00:02:50: prior to that, Kennedy Stewart was a faculty member of
00:02:50 --> 00:02:51: the School of Public Policy,
00:02:51 --> 00:02:54: where you focus a lot of his research and work
00:02:54 --> 00:02:55: on urban issues.
00:02:55 --> 00:02:58: His PhD from the London School of Economics and spend
00:02:58 --> 00:03:01: a lot of time in cities around the world researching
00:03:01 --> 00:03:04: them and brought that sort of expertise both as a
00:03:04 --> 00:03:06: Member of Parliament but also as mayor.
00:03:06 --> 00:03:08: He also lives in downtown Vancouver,
00:03:08 --> 00:03:11: and as a renter so is well aware of what's
00:03:11 --> 00:03:12: going on in our downtown core,
00:03:12 --> 00:03:14: but also. The city generally,
00:03:14 --> 00:03:15: both as a resident and as mayor,
00:03:15 --> 00:03:17: so we're excited to have him.
00:03:17 --> 00:03:19: So Kennedy, I'm going to pass it over to you
00:03:19 --> 00:03:22: and once again thank you very much for joining us.
00:03:22 --> 00:03:25: Thanks very much talking and and thanks for having me
00:03:26 --> 00:03:26: here.
00:03:26 --> 00:03:29: I'm excited to attend as I always am and now
00:03:29 --> 00:03:30: I'm going to try.
00:03:30 --> 00:03:33: The toughest part is sharing my screen here to make
00:03:33 --> 00:03:35: sure everybody can.
00:03:35 --> 00:03:38: See my presentation just one second.
00:03:42 --> 00:03:45: OK, I think I share it here one second.
00:03:48 --> 00:03:50: My second screen seems to have disappeared.
00:03:50 --> 00:03:53: It's going to take me one second here to solve
00:03:53 --> 00:03:55: that problem to this environment,
00:03:55 --> 00:03:57: so you have to you have to sing for us
00:03:57 --> 00:03:58: while I'm setting this up.
00:03:58 --> 00:04:02: I don't know if anyone wants to hear that.
00:04:02 --> 00:04:04: Yeah, just one second here,
00:04:04 --> 00:04:06: just.
00:04:06 --> 00:04:09: It's going to have to.
00:04:09 --> 00:04:11: Just going to have to start this year first and
00:04:11 --> 00:04:12: then re share it.
00:04:15 --> 00:04:17: There we go OK.
00:04:25 --> 00:04:26: Already.
00:04:33 --> 00:04:36: Alright, here we go OK.
00:04:36 --> 00:04:39: Prefer it, we can all see that.

00:04:39 --> 00:04:41: So excellent.
00:04:41 --> 00:04:44: Great so thanks very much for having me here today
00:04:44 --> 00:04:45: and 1st.
00:04:45 --> 00:04:48: I want to acknowledge run the unceded traditional territories of
00:04:49 --> 00:04:49: the Musqueam,
00:04:49 --> 00:04:53: Squamish and cycle to people and really thank them for
00:04:53 --> 00:04:56: their generosity to all who live on their lands.
00:04:56 --> 00:04:59: I last spoke to you in this this capacity in
00:04:59 --> 00:05:00: December of 2019,
00:05:00 --> 00:05:04: and that was just a few months before the entire
00:05:04 --> 00:05:05: world changed forever.
00:05:05 --> 00:05:09: Perhaps so there's clearly lots of new things to talk
00:05:09 --> 00:05:09: about.
00:05:09 --> 00:05:13: Lots of challenges, and we can go through those,
00:05:13 --> 00:05:15: especially in the Q&A if you want.
00:05:15 --> 00:05:19: But I have a tremendous amount of optimism about our
00:05:19 --> 00:05:19: city,
00:05:19 --> 00:05:22: its economy, and our overall well being.
00:05:22 --> 00:05:26: So I'm going to go through three things that may
00:05:26 --> 00:05:28: be of interest to you and.
00:05:28 --> 00:05:31: May feed questions afterwards. The first is how we tackled
00:05:31 --> 00:05:32: COVID-19,
00:05:32 --> 00:05:36: which is, in my view the single greatest challenge our
00:05:36 --> 00:05:37: city has ever faced.
00:05:37 --> 00:05:41: Second, I want to talk about why I'm optimistic about
00:05:41 --> 00:05:45: our near future and how we're going to emerge from
00:05:45 --> 00:05:48: COVID-19 even stronger than the prior to the pandemic.
00:05:48 --> 00:05:52: And finally why I'm optimistic and how we can ensure
00:05:52 --> 00:05:56: that the coming rebound is just and equitable in terms
00:05:56 --> 00:05:57: of housing.
00:05:57 --> 00:06:00: So most of what we talking bout in details is
00:06:00 --> 00:06:03: the second half of the talk is is about our
00:06:03 --> 00:06:04: housing market.
00:06:07 --> 00:06:10: OK, so March 19th 2019 I just declared the first
00:06:10 --> 00:06:13: local state of emergency in the history of the City
00:06:14 --> 00:06:14: of Vancouver.
00:06:14 --> 00:06:17: Afew days earlier as a pretty scary time.
00:06:17 --> 00:06:20: We worked with Doctor Patricia Daly,
00:06:20 --> 00:06:24: administer Adrian Dix to close all bars and restaurants for
00:06:24 --> 00:06:28: Saint Patrick's Day to help slow the spread of COVID-19
00:06:28 --> 00:06:29: in our city.

00:06:29 --> 00:06:31: So a very, very difficult time.
00:06:31 --> 00:06:35: I knew right then that this global pandemic would present
00:06:35 --> 00:06:36: a challenge greater than.
00:06:36 --> 00:06:39: Anyway, ever faced in the city?
00:06:39 --> 00:06:42: And in fact, it was so stressful I cracked a
00:06:42 --> 00:06:44: molar in my sleep one night and had to go
00:06:44 --> 00:06:48: for emergency dental surgery so I don't know if everybody
00:06:48 --> 00:06:52: wants to revisit that first couple of months of covid,
00:06:52 --> 00:06:56: but it certainly was a super challenging time and a
00:06:56 --> 00:06:59: tough way to jump into this new job.
00:06:59 --> 00:07:03: State of emergency, though, allowed us to take extraordinary measures
00:07:03 --> 00:07:06: to protect the city against COVID-19 and especially our most
00:07:06 --> 00:07:07: vulnerable neighbors.
00:07:07 --> 00:07:10: In the days and weeks that followed,
00:07:10 --> 00:07:14: we mobilized an army of local public health workers as
00:07:14 --> 00:07:15: city employees,
00:07:15 --> 00:07:20: nonprofits, and peer organizations really to defend the city against
00:07:20 --> 00:07:20: Covid.
00:07:20 --> 00:07:24: We open emergency shelters and community centers,
00:07:24 --> 00:07:27: set up meal delivery programs and single room hotels.
00:07:27 --> 00:07:31: Installed mobile sanitation facilities secured,
00:07:31 --> 00:07:35: and you member how scarce PPE was at the beginning
00:07:35 --> 00:07:40: was securing and coordinating PP deliveries to frontline workers.
00:07:40 --> 00:07:43: So that was in the first wave and inside abated
00:07:43 --> 00:07:44: a bit.
00:07:44 --> 00:07:48: In the summer we introduced kilometres of slow streets,
00:07:48 --> 00:07:50: so wide and spaces for sidewalk use.
00:07:50 --> 00:07:55: Pop-up plazas rapidly put in place a temporary patio permit
00:07:55 --> 00:07:59: system that allowed to over 400 establishments to put up
00:07:59 --> 00:08:03: temporary patios and to help them survive through what was
00:08:03 --> 00:08:08: a really difficult time. We didn't waste time either to
00:08:08 --> 00:08:09: modernize during this.
00:08:09 --> 00:08:12: We can't use that as an opportunity to.
00:08:12 --> 00:08:16: Move all our city deliberations online and open up our
00:08:16 --> 00:08:17: public hearing process.
00:08:17 --> 00:08:20: I think to be way more accessible than it ever
00:08:21 --> 00:08:24: was with people being able to phone in and participate
00:08:24 --> 00:08:28: rather than sitting around in City Hall waiting to have
00:08:28 --> 00:08:30: their input, say in public hearings.
00:08:30 --> 00:08:33: We also moved all our permitting online and I'm going

00:08:34 --> 00:08:37: to talk a bit about the opportunities and challenges there,
00:08:37 --> 00:08:41: but that was moving from an in person paper based
00:08:41 --> 00:08:43: system to online permitting.
00:08:43 --> 00:08:45: For all types of permits was was an innovation that
00:08:46 --> 00:08:48: we've been continuing to to perfect.
00:08:50 --> 00:08:53: So all these daily decisions and they were daily to
00:08:54 --> 00:08:56: protect the lives of people in the city,
00:08:56 --> 00:08:59: have really paid off, and I think that's an important
00:08:59 --> 00:09:03: thing to remember when we're talking about the economy.
00:09:03 --> 00:09:05: Is that what we did and continue to do to
00:09:05 --> 00:09:06: fight?
00:09:06 --> 00:09:09: COVID-19 is pretty well that one of the most important
00:09:09 --> 00:09:12: things we can do for our local economy.
00:09:12 --> 00:09:15: And as you can see by this chart here,
00:09:15 --> 00:09:18: compiled by the Canadian Urban Institute,
00:09:18 --> 00:09:23: Vancouver's performance was among the strongest of any major Canadian
00:09:23 --> 00:09:23: city.
00:09:23 --> 00:09:26: So in terms of cases per 100,000 people,
00:09:26 --> 00:09:30: we've had just over 2000 per 100,000 where you look
00:09:30 --> 00:09:32: at other major cities in Canada,
00:09:32 --> 00:09:34: which are well above that mark,
00:09:34 --> 00:09:38: and so. This really this didn't happen by accident.
00:09:38 --> 00:09:41: It really kind of shows the social fabric of our
00:09:41 --> 00:09:42: city.
00:09:42 --> 00:09:45: It shows you know the response of the of the
00:09:45 --> 00:09:46: city administration.
00:09:46 --> 00:09:50: But I think more importantly of residents Anna businesses because
00:09:50 --> 00:09:53: we all came together to look over our family,
00:09:53 --> 00:09:57: friends, loved ones and neighbors and so we can all
00:09:57 --> 00:09:58: collectively say good job.
00:09:58 --> 00:10:02: Because what we did during Covid and continue to do
00:10:02 --> 00:10:05: is really affected the safety of our health but also
00:10:05 --> 00:10:07: help protect our economy.
00:10:07 --> 00:10:09: So you know they're really proud of that,
00:10:09 --> 00:10:12: and I think this is something as being noticed around
00:10:12 --> 00:10:14: the world because we hear when I talk to folks
00:10:15 --> 00:10:16: that are looking to locate here.
00:10:16 --> 00:10:19: Whether it's a movie is through your tech industry.
00:10:19 --> 00:10:23: They're all saying, like, we've been noticing how well the
00:10:23 --> 00:10:26: vancouvers fared through through Covid.

00:10:26 --> 00:10:30: So this positive outcome for kovit or better than than
00:10:30 --> 00:10:33: others for many others will set us up for a
00:10:33 --> 00:10:34: strong recovery.
00:10:34 --> 00:10:38: Here's the October 2020 data from the Vancouver Economic Commission
00:10:38 --> 00:10:42: that forecasts are growth GDP growth into 2021.
00:10:42 --> 00:10:45: This is the projections are done by the Conference Board
00:10:46 --> 00:10:46: of Canada.
00:10:46 --> 00:10:50: So this is a very reputable organization and it shows
00:10:50 --> 00:10:52: a very strong bounce back.
00:10:52 --> 00:10:55: You know our growth rate is pretty high here in
00:10:55 --> 00:10:56: Vancouver,
00:10:56 --> 00:10:59: generally with. Prior to Covid kind of being between 3
00:11:00 --> 00:11:00: and 5%
00:11:00 --> 00:11:04: every year, but the Conference Board is is showing us
00:11:04 --> 00:11:04: that,
00:11:04 --> 00:11:07: you know, we could hit as high as a 7%
00:11:07 --> 00:11:09: growth this year and into 2021.
00:11:09 --> 00:11:11: So what does that mean?
00:11:11 --> 00:11:15: Mainly, it means you know lots of economic activity locally,
00:11:15 --> 00:11:18: but also an influx of foreign investment,
00:11:18 --> 00:11:21: which is, which is a good thing if it comes
00:11:22 --> 00:11:23: into industry.
00:11:25 --> 00:11:29: Uhm? So what does this mean for folks on the
00:11:29 --> 00:11:29: ground?
00:11:29 --> 00:11:34: Well, here's another Statscan BISTAN scan data that shows us
00:11:34 --> 00:11:37: our unemployment rate in Metro Vancouver.
00:11:37 --> 00:11:40: The If you look at the our baseline unemployment rate
00:11:41 --> 00:11:42: is around 4 to 5%.
00:11:42 --> 00:11:45: If you see what happened to us last year,
00:11:45 --> 00:11:47: we had almost 15% in June,
00:11:47 --> 00:11:51: which everybody felt it was super super stressful and the
00:11:51 --> 00:11:53: federal programs are very,
00:11:53 --> 00:11:55: very helpful to us. Really,
00:11:55 --> 00:11:59: everybody in the city's urban other programs you can see
00:11:59 --> 00:12:02: now because of our health response.
00:12:02 --> 00:12:05: Are you know we our unemployment rate now is falling
00:12:05 --> 00:12:06: down to 7.7%
00:12:06 --> 00:12:10: and? It will probably stabilize there until we get back
00:12:10 --> 00:12:10: scenes.
00:12:10 --> 00:12:14: If you compare this to Toronto that went through a
00:12:14 --> 00:12:15: lot more lockdowns,

00:12:15 --> 00:12:18: there's still over 10% unemployment and that that 3%
00:12:18 --> 00:12:19: gap is a huge one.
00:12:19 --> 00:12:23: When you think about what Vancouver would look like if
00:12:23 --> 00:12:24: we were at a 10%
00:12:24 --> 00:12:26: unemployment rate, it would be.
00:12:26 --> 00:12:28: It would be tougher here,
00:12:28 --> 00:12:29: so we're not otherwise yet.
00:12:29 --> 00:12:31: We've got a ways to go,
00:12:31 --> 00:12:33: and there are lots of pockets of our local economy
00:12:33 --> 00:12:36: that are still very hard hit and I have round
00:12:36 --> 00:12:39: tables with business improvement associations all the time and we're
00:12:39 --> 00:12:41: trying to find ways to help,
00:12:41 --> 00:12:45: especially small business. But relatively speaking we're in good shape
00:12:45 --> 00:12:47: and we've done a pretty good job.
00:12:47 --> 00:12:51: We were never completely locked down and we were nowhere
00:12:51 --> 00:12:54: close to putting in curfews like they did in many
00:12:54 --> 00:12:55: American cities,
00:12:55 --> 00:12:57: and this isn't an accident.
00:12:57 --> 00:13:00: This is all of us kind of following the public
00:13:00 --> 00:13:02: health orders of Doctor Bonnie,
00:13:02 --> 00:13:06: Henry and Doctor Patricia Daly and really just taking the
00:13:06 --> 00:13:08: pandemic super seriously.
00:13:11 --> 00:13:14: So what what caused me to crack my more last
00:13:14 --> 00:13:17: spring was a lot of data that we were getting
00:13:17 --> 00:13:21: about lost revenues in the city within the city budget.
00:13:21 --> 00:13:25: And it's about a $1.6 billion operating budget was much
00:13:25 --> 00:13:29: more way over that in terms of capital.
00:13:29 --> 00:13:33: And it's primarily primarily relies on property tax collection.
00:13:33 --> 00:13:36: An up in some revenues from,
00:13:36 --> 00:13:39: say, parking and other fees and services.
00:13:39 --> 00:13:42: So we were seeing a massive drop in revenue.
00:13:42 --> 00:13:46: I mean, really, there was nothing happening downtown.
00:13:46 --> 00:13:50: Transit hadn't got kind of back on its feet and
00:13:50 --> 00:13:54: we were faced with really a revenue collapse.
00:13:54 --> 00:13:57: We've just today we're announcing our.
00:13:57 --> 00:14:02: Our final version of what happened in last year with
00:14:02 --> 00:14:04: our budget and.
00:14:04 --> 00:14:07: We had we've had a massive hit to our revenue
00:14:07 --> 00:14:09: of about $90 million.

00:14:09 --> 00:14:11: We've had an increase in expenses,
00:14:11 --> 00:14:15: operating costs due to covid battling covid about $16 million,
00:14:15 --> 00:14:18: and so that that was a really scary we had
00:14:19 --> 00:14:20: some data is showing,
00:14:20 --> 00:14:23: for example, that there was going to be a massive
00:14:24 --> 00:14:26: default rate in property tax,
00:14:26 --> 00:14:29: both business and residential, in terms of payment,
00:14:29 --> 00:14:32: which was happening right across Canada.
00:14:32 --> 00:14:34: So what we did is we.
00:14:34 --> 00:14:36: At the city got down to work.
00:14:36 --> 00:14:40: We are one of the only organizations at these government
00:14:40 --> 00:14:43: organizations to layoff staff out of our 10,000 staff,
00:14:43 --> 00:14:45: we laid off about 1800 people,
00:14:45 --> 00:14:48: which was a very hard hit and in any other
00:14:48 --> 00:14:52: circumstances you would have had a massive series of strikes
00:14:53 --> 00:14:55: if we laid off that many people,
00:14:55 --> 00:14:58: so very grateful to the unions here in the city
00:14:58 --> 00:14:59: for helping us out.
00:14:59 --> 00:15:01: Management in Council took a 10%
00:15:01 --> 00:15:03: pay cut.
00:15:03 --> 00:15:07: We'd deferred $250 million in capital projects and the result
00:15:07 --> 00:15:10: of this is that we've all this work is that
00:15:10 --> 00:15:14: we've managed to maintain our AAA credit rating with Moody's
00:15:14 --> 00:15:16: and S&P, so you know,
00:15:16 --> 00:15:19: it was a very dark period last year for for
00:15:19 --> 00:15:21: the city as an organization.
00:15:21 --> 00:15:24: I know many businesses are also facing a tough times,
00:15:24 --> 00:15:26: but we've come through this.
00:15:26 --> 00:15:29: OK, we do have some tough choices to make.
00:15:29 --> 00:15:33: This year's revenues are still going to be down and
00:15:33 --> 00:15:35: expenses are going to be up.
00:15:35 --> 00:15:38: But but you know at this point feeling good,
00:15:38 --> 00:15:42: especially since the credit agencies also see us in a
00:15:42 --> 00:15:44: good financial situation.
00:15:48 --> 00:15:52: OK, so. Combined with our covid response,
00:15:52 --> 00:15:54: are projected economic growth really?
00:15:54 --> 00:15:58: You know, we're really thinking that the downtown of Vancouver
00:15:58 --> 00:16:02: in the conversations I have with many international and local
00:16:02 --> 00:16:06: companies is that we should be preparing for a boom
00:16:06 --> 00:16:09: in the downtown in Vancouver.

00:16:09 --> 00:16:10: Just by way of example,
00:16:10 --> 00:16:13: we have 15 new office towers coming downtown like you
00:16:13 --> 00:16:14: hear all this.
00:16:14 --> 00:16:18: These kind of stories and columns about nobody wanting to
00:16:18 --> 00:16:19: work in offices anymore.
00:16:19 --> 00:16:21: That is absolutely not true.
00:16:21 --> 00:16:23: You are going to see some shifts,
00:16:23 --> 00:16:26: but. But you know the market is not going to
00:16:26 --> 00:16:27: build stuff.
00:16:27 --> 00:16:29: It's not going to sell.
00:16:29 --> 00:16:32: So 15 new office towers coming downtown all on track
00:16:33 --> 00:16:33: for 2024,
00:16:33 --> 00:16:38: three point 5,000,000 square feet of office space is already
00:16:38 --> 00:16:39: under construction.
00:16:39 --> 00:16:43: Only three of the towers set to be completed by
00:16:43 --> 00:16:45: next year still have space available,
00:16:45 --> 00:16:48: so it's not just building at the empty rooms,
00:16:48 --> 00:16:53: it is rooms that are immediately being snatched up.
00:16:53 --> 00:16:58: So despite our vacancy rate moving rate increasing a little
00:16:58 --> 00:16:59: bit over kovid.
00:16:59 --> 00:17:03: We still have one of the lowest office vacancy rates
00:17:03 --> 00:17:06: in in North America so that that is why we're
00:17:06 --> 00:17:08: thinking that this is,
00:17:08 --> 00:17:12: you know, good times are coming and we have to
00:17:12 --> 00:17:15: be ready to to to catch this.
00:17:15 --> 00:17:16: To catch the wave.
00:17:18 --> 00:17:22: So that's kind of moving into the plan for recovery,
00:17:22 --> 00:17:26: and even though there's a strong recovery coming,
00:17:26 --> 00:17:29: especially if we have senior governments,
00:17:29 --> 00:17:32: you just saw Joe Biden putting in $3 trillion for
00:17:32 --> 00:17:34: economic recovery in the US.
00:17:34 --> 00:17:38: We have the federal budget coming out in April or
00:17:38 --> 00:17:39: will also see stimulus,
00:17:39 --> 00:17:43: I'm sure, especially in infrastructure investment,
00:17:43 --> 00:17:46: we're going to have a strong recovery,
00:17:46 --> 00:17:49: but we just can't. We just can't let it happen.
00:17:49 --> 00:17:53: We this recovery needs to be steered and because it
00:17:53 --> 00:17:54: needs to be equitable,
00:17:54 --> 00:17:57: so it can't just be a recovery for the rich.
00:17:57 --> 00:18:01: It has to be for everybody and Vancouver has to
00:18:01 --> 00:18:03: be a city that works for everyone.
00:18:03 --> 00:18:06: So I'm going to zoom in on housing here and

00:18:06 --> 00:18:09: just talk about kind of the three problems we have
00:18:09 --> 00:18:10: to tackle.
00:18:10 --> 00:18:13: Not just now but.
00:18:13 --> 00:18:17: During the recovery and in terms of how they're related
00:18:17 --> 00:18:18: to housing,
00:18:18 --> 00:18:23: so first. Homelessness our last homeless count people we had
00:18:23 --> 00:18:28: over 2000 people who really are sleeping rough are in
00:18:28 --> 00:18:31: shelters in our last homeless count and.
00:18:31 --> 00:18:35: What happened during the pandemic and still is in place
00:18:35 --> 00:18:40: is that physical distancing measures distancing measures apply to everybody,
00:18:40 --> 00:18:43: and so the day that they came in place with
00:18:43 --> 00:18:45: the provincial health order.
00:18:45 --> 00:18:50: We have over 7000 single room occupancy hotel rooms in
00:18:50 --> 00:18:54: this city and prior to the pandemic you're allowed to
00:18:54 --> 00:18:56: have a guest.
00:18:56 --> 00:19:01: Immediately when physical distance saying these single very small single
00:19:01 --> 00:19:04: rooms basically all put in no guest policies at the
00:19:05 --> 00:19:09: same time our shelters were reduced to sometimes as low
00:19:09 --> 00:19:12: as 30% capacity. So really overnight we had.
00:19:12 --> 00:19:17: Maybe 1000 to 1500. More people land on the street.
00:19:17 --> 00:19:21: Of course we had people who lost their jobs as
00:19:21 --> 00:19:22: well in that mix.
00:19:22 --> 00:19:26: So you know, This is why we're seeing you know
00:19:26 --> 00:19:32: differences in our streets both downtown and in the neighborhoods
00:19:32 --> 00:19:33: and in parks.
00:19:33 --> 00:19:37: We were kind of investing lots in to help folks
00:19:37 --> 00:19:41: living on the street prior to covid by Covid.
00:19:41 --> 00:19:46: Just, you know, this challenge exploded.
00:19:46 --> 00:19:49: The second issue is rental housing costs.
00:19:49 --> 00:19:52: You know we've had a small drop in rents during
00:19:52 --> 00:19:52: Covid,
00:19:52 --> 00:19:55: but it's the price of renting here is still very,
00:19:55 --> 00:19:59: very high. You know, averaging around 1900 bucks for a
00:19:59 --> 00:20:02: one bedroom so that that makes it it's prohibitive.
00:20:02 --> 00:20:05: For people who want to start and grow life here
00:20:05 --> 00:20:06: and that that is,
00:20:06 --> 00:20:08: that is a huge problem.
00:20:08 --> 00:20:12: And finally, there's the. The cost of buying a home.
00:20:12 --> 00:20:16: So when we see these kind of bidding wars happening

00:20:16 --> 00:20:17: in East Vancouver,
00:20:17 --> 00:20:21: where houses are going $800,000 over asking was you know
00:20:21 --> 00:20:25: house most single detached homes approaching $2,000,000?
00:20:25 --> 00:20:30: We have a serious serious problem here so I'm just
00:20:30 --> 00:20:32: going to walk through.
00:20:32 --> 00:20:37: The plans for dealing with these three issues next.
00:20:37 --> 00:20:40: OK, so in terms of homelessness,
00:20:40 --> 00:20:45: you know. The advantage of serving in Ottawa for eight
00:20:45 --> 00:20:48: years is 7 years is not only do I know
00:20:48 --> 00:20:51: a lot of the people that are now ministers,
00:20:51 --> 00:20:54: I also know how the system works there.
00:20:54 --> 00:20:57: And I knew that there was absolutely no way that
00:20:57 --> 00:21:00: the city on its own can really do anything to
00:21:01 --> 00:21:02: tackle homelessness.
00:21:02 --> 00:21:04: One unit of of housing,
00:21:04 --> 00:21:06: whether it's modular or otherwise,
00:21:06 --> 00:21:11: starts at $250,000 and that doesn't even include the services
00:21:11 --> 00:21:11: so.
00:21:11 --> 00:21:13: A city cannot on its own,
00:21:13 --> 00:21:19: build its way out of a homelessness crisis.
00:21:19 --> 00:21:22: So since becoming mirror I have secured nearly half a
00:21:22 --> 00:21:26: billion dollars for housing from the provincial and federal governments
00:21:26 --> 00:21:28: for temporary modular homes.
00:21:28 --> 00:21:32: We bought single room occupancy hotels to refurbish them.
00:21:32 --> 00:21:35: We now have permanent modular homes coming online.
00:21:35 --> 00:21:38: We have permanent regular builds that we work.
00:21:38 --> 00:21:42: Of course, with nonprofits to build and improve shelter accommodation.
00:21:42 --> 00:21:45: So Council also approved my $30 million plan for City
00:21:46 --> 00:21:46: investment.
00:21:46 --> 00:21:49: So there's on the screen as some of the highlights
00:21:49 --> 00:21:52: of some of these individual packages of money,
00:21:52 --> 00:21:57: but. We've secured nearly half a billion dollars with much
00:21:57 --> 00:21:58: more coming.
00:21:58 --> 00:22:01: And I gotta say that we're finally in a place
00:22:01 --> 00:22:04: I think I look past to pass councils and what
00:22:04 --> 00:22:08: difficulty they had with the federal government in the province.
00:22:08 --> 00:22:12: But we're finally in a place where we've got real
00:22:12 --> 00:22:13: partnerships and I,
00:22:13 --> 00:22:16: I just can't tell you enough how great it is

00:22:16 --> 00:22:20: to have David Eby and emedicine as the federal and
00:22:20 --> 00:22:23: provincial housing ministers like they get it there.
00:22:23 --> 00:22:27: About quick delivery, they're changing their programs to help us
00:22:28 --> 00:22:30: and it it's really working very well,
00:22:30 --> 00:22:34: so you'll see much more of this in the coming
00:22:34 --> 00:22:36: weeks and months.
00:22:36 --> 00:22:39: On high rental costs.
00:22:39 --> 00:22:42: We've had some drops due to Cove it,
00:22:42 --> 00:22:45: and I'll do a variety of factors.
00:22:45 --> 00:22:51: Actually COVID-19 travel restrictions means very few international students or
00:22:51 --> 00:22:54: tourists using rentals or short term rentals.
00:22:54 --> 00:22:58: So that's you know, helped some supply come back on
00:22:58 --> 00:23:03: the market from those groups not renting empty homes tax,
00:23:03 --> 00:23:05: which we've just increased to 3%.
00:23:05 --> 00:23:10: Just push more units on the rental market and.
00:23:10 --> 00:23:13: Plus we built a lot more market as secured market
00:23:13 --> 00:23:16: and below market rental housing.
00:23:16 --> 00:23:18: So if you see the table here,
00:23:18 --> 00:23:22: even with covid we exceeded our targets in terms of
00:23:22 --> 00:23:26: approvals on Council both in terms of social and supportive
00:23:26 --> 00:23:29: housing and purpose built market,
00:23:29 --> 00:23:31: you know secured market rental.
00:23:31 --> 00:23:35: So we we sought to approve 2000 units of rental
00:23:35 --> 00:23:36: housing,
00:23:36 --> 00:23:38: but we've actually exceeded that.
00:23:38 --> 00:23:42: So pretty happy about that that through covid.
00:23:42 --> 00:23:44: And with their online stuff,
00:23:44 --> 00:23:49: we still managed to get those through public hearings.
00:23:49 --> 00:23:53: So the other thing I'm really proud of is our
00:23:53 --> 00:23:56: modern income housing pilot project,
00:23:56 --> 00:23:58: which just in a nutshell.
00:23:58 --> 00:24:03: Essentially, if you get a market secured market rental building,
00:24:03 --> 00:24:07: 20% of the units are offered at rents much lower
00:24:07 --> 00:24:08: than the market.
00:24:08 --> 00:24:10: You know what the market demands,
00:24:10 --> 00:24:12: but they're also vacancy controlled,
00:24:12 --> 00:24:15: meaning with those low rents are locked in for the
00:24:15 --> 00:24:16: life of the building.
00:24:16 --> 00:24:18: So just for an example,
00:24:18 --> 00:24:21: a new studio apartment in kits would rent for 950

00:24:21 --> 00:24:23: bucks a month and that's locked in for the life
00:24:23 --> 00:24:24: of the building,
00:24:24 --> 00:24:27: so that is.
00:24:27 --> 00:24:30: You know when you're in a market environment when it
00:24:30 --> 00:24:31: comes to housing,
00:24:31 --> 00:24:33: 95% of our housing is privately owned.
00:24:33 --> 00:24:35: The best you can do really,
00:24:35 --> 00:24:38: if you don't have seen at the senior government investment,
00:24:38 --> 00:24:40: is to bend the market as much as possible.
00:24:40 --> 00:24:43: And this is this. A pilot project does that I
00:24:43 --> 00:24:46: think we're up to approving eleven of these buildings now
00:24:46 --> 00:24:49: with up to 20 in our current pilot project,
00:24:49 --> 00:24:51: but I think this has been a roaring success.
00:24:54 --> 00:24:56: We have a lot more to do though,
00:24:56 --> 00:25:00: because the housing market is really key to our economic
00:25:00 --> 00:25:04: success because it not only provides direct construction jobs.
00:25:04 --> 00:25:07: But it houses are growing workforce.
00:25:07 --> 00:25:09: So you know.
00:25:09 --> 00:25:12: Now that I know how the city works after being
00:25:12 --> 00:25:14: here just over 2 years,
00:25:14 --> 00:25:17: I was really struck by how many times I was
00:25:17 --> 00:25:20: told that a project was stuck in the bureaucracy.
00:25:20 --> 00:25:23: So what I have ordered and Council back me was
00:25:23 --> 00:25:25: a backlog inventory.
00:25:25 --> 00:25:27: By the end of this quarter,
00:25:27 --> 00:25:29: where we would have all projects major,
00:25:29 --> 00:25:32: a rental project center.
00:25:32 --> 00:25:35: I have been, you know developers applied to build.
00:25:35 --> 00:25:37: We want a list of all of them and we
00:25:37 --> 00:25:38: want to know,
00:25:38 --> 00:25:41: for example what the aggregate numbers are,
00:25:41 --> 00:25:43: but also how we can start to bust up this
00:25:43 --> 00:25:47: backlog and get these and get these buildings rolling and
00:25:47 --> 00:25:48: get answers for the investors.
00:25:48 --> 00:25:52: Either these things are moving ahead or they're not.
00:25:52 --> 00:25:54: So let's decide. Let's not wait five 710 years to
00:25:54 --> 00:25:56: get people answers,
00:25:56 --> 00:26:00: so that is. That's been approved by Council and we're
00:26:00 --> 00:26:01: rolling out.
00:26:01 --> 00:26:05: You know, this kind of backlog project.
00:26:05 --> 00:26:07: Now.
00:26:07 --> 00:26:10: The other thing is Council staff and put forward proposals

00:26:10 --> 00:26:14: so Council they could build thousands of the rental homes
00:26:14 --> 00:26:17: in the transition areas close to arterials with small apartment
00:26:17 --> 00:26:20: buildings, the kind that used to be very common all
00:26:20 --> 00:26:21: over our cities.
00:26:21 --> 00:26:24: So there are a series of proposals that's coming forward
00:26:24 --> 00:26:27: to Council over this year and you should keep a
00:26:27 --> 00:26:28: close eye on those.
00:26:32 --> 00:26:37: OK, so affordable homeownership. Uhm?
00:26:37 --> 00:26:40: There's really no way to have a sustainable city in
00:26:40 --> 00:26:43: the vast majority of renters who want to buy homes
00:26:43 --> 00:26:44: are frozen out of abiding.
00:26:44 --> 00:26:47: I mean, it's a middle class aspirational thing to to
00:26:47 --> 00:26:50: purchase it and live in a home that you own,
00:26:50 --> 00:26:54: but that is essentially really becoming impossible for the vast
00:26:54 --> 00:26:57: majority of people who don't already own a home in
00:26:57 --> 00:26:58: the city,
00:26:58 --> 00:27:00: which is over half.
00:27:00 --> 00:27:02: So why are home prices so high?
00:27:02 --> 00:27:05: You know, that's the $64 million question,
00:27:05 --> 00:27:10: but but there's some things that are becoming pretty clear.
00:27:10 --> 00:27:14: Is that we really can't blame foreign buyers anymore like
00:27:14 --> 00:27:17: this was something that was very popular to do,
00:27:17 --> 00:27:20: and why we can't is because there's a lot of
00:27:20 --> 00:27:24: data saying that this just isn't what's what's driving.
00:27:24 --> 00:27:26: The price increases we've had,
00:27:26 --> 00:27:30: I think 5 demand side measures new speculation,
00:27:30 --> 00:27:32: tax, vacancy, tax. We've just.
00:27:32 --> 00:27:36: Triple The empty home tax all all which detur's foreign
00:27:36 --> 00:27:40: buyers from buying a condo unit and have in holding
00:27:40 --> 00:27:41: it empty.
00:27:41 --> 00:27:45: We've had some data now that says home home spot
00:27:45 --> 00:27:48: by non Canadians have dropped from 3%
00:27:48 --> 00:27:52: in 2017 to 1.7% in 2019 and with covid the
00:27:52 --> 00:27:56: world is basically been shut down for the past year.
00:27:56 --> 00:28:01: We don't have a lot of people buying homes into
00:28:01 --> 00:28:02: reversing in.
00:28:02 --> 00:28:05: So you know, I think we should keep an eye
00:28:05 --> 00:28:07: on foreign purchasing,
00:28:07 --> 00:28:10: but we we really have to look elsewhere for the
00:28:10 --> 00:28:13: cause of these massive inflation crisis.
00:28:13 --> 00:28:16: We really can't blame money laundering either.
00:28:16 --> 00:28:20: The new BC NDP government is brought in much stronger

00:28:20 --> 00:28:21: rules.
00:28:21 --> 00:28:22: And if I was going to assess this,
00:28:22 --> 00:28:26: I'd say I've seen the enemy and it is us.
00:28:26 --> 00:28:29: The simple fact is that Canadians are really driving up
00:28:29 --> 00:28:31: housing prices by buying homes.
00:28:31 --> 00:28:34: A record low interest rates and more and more homes.
00:28:34 --> 00:28:37: More and more homes are seen as an investment vehicle
00:28:37 --> 00:28:39: rather than just a place he live.
00:28:39 --> 00:28:41: I don't think this is news to anybody,
00:28:41 --> 00:28:43: so why just buy one home and you can have
00:28:44 --> 00:28:46: two or three or four as the as the prices
00:28:46 --> 00:28:49: keep increasing and there they are attractive in terms of.
00:28:49 --> 00:28:53: Of, you know, capitalizing on investments.
00:28:53 --> 00:28:56: So this might be OK if supply was keeping pace,
00:28:56 --> 00:28:59: but it isn't. We have 68,000 lots in the city
00:28:59 --> 00:29:02: designated for as single detached homes,
00:29:02 --> 00:29:05: and we're not making any new ones really.
00:29:05 --> 00:29:08: Everything that we're building is usually multiple units,
00:29:08 --> 00:29:11: so so all this means is demand is for single
00:29:11 --> 00:29:12: family.
00:29:12 --> 00:29:15: Single detached homes is is rising and supply is not.
00:29:15 --> 00:29:18: So that means prices go higher and higher,
00:29:18 --> 00:29:22: specially if it not only encourages those who are living
00:29:22 --> 00:29:26: in these homes but are also seeing them as investments.
00:29:26 --> 00:29:30: So last year I worked with the local architects and
00:29:30 --> 00:29:33: builders to develop what I was calling my making home
00:29:33 --> 00:29:36: proposal and this is just 100 lot pilot project.
00:29:36 --> 00:29:40: The idea here was to turn lots that were zoned
00:29:40 --> 00:29:45: for single detached homes into multiple units including units that
00:29:45 --> 00:29:48: were permanently set aside for middle class families.
00:29:48 --> 00:29:52: So this project would have created up to 600 total
00:29:52 --> 00:29:56: new units with on these on 100 lots single detached
00:29:56 --> 00:30:01: lots with up to 200 protected from speculations for the
00:30:01 --> 00:30:04: use of covenants. Uh, unfortunately,
00:30:04 --> 00:30:08: Council rejected this. What I thought was a great thing
00:30:08 --> 00:30:09: to experiment with,
00:30:09 --> 00:30:13: not only inform an architecture but also in finance.
00:30:13 --> 00:30:16: How could you find innovative ways to,
00:30:16 --> 00:30:19: you know, get four to six families on a lot
00:30:19 --> 00:30:22: that really just held one in the past,
00:30:22 --> 00:30:25: so I'm not giving up on this and this will

00:30:25 --> 00:30:28: come back this year for another kick at the can.
00:30:31 --> 00:30:33: So I just want to tell you 3 quick stories
00:30:34 --> 00:30:36: to tell you what this all looks like if we
00:30:36 --> 00:30:37: get it right.
00:30:37 --> 00:30:40: If we really dig in and have the courage to
00:30:40 --> 00:30:43: really change our current system and and culture and think
00:30:44 --> 00:30:46: of ourselves as a real global city,
00:30:46 --> 00:30:47: and I think we have to.
00:30:47 --> 00:30:49: So in terms of homelessness,
00:30:49 --> 00:30:51: just imagine if you will,
00:30:51 --> 00:30:54: as someone who's lived on the streets for years because
00:30:54 --> 00:30:57: they lost their job or their family broke up.
00:30:57 --> 00:31:01: Or maybe they are injured on the job and became
00:31:01 --> 00:31:02: addicted to fentanyl.
00:31:02 --> 00:31:06: So instead of instead of living on the street,
00:31:06 --> 00:31:08: imagine if this person is dead,
00:31:08 --> 00:31:11: gets a warm, safe place to live inside,
00:31:11 --> 00:31:15: say a modular housing unit that's pictured here.
00:31:15 --> 00:31:18: They because they start to get stabilized they can get
00:31:19 --> 00:31:22: access to health care and they can deal with issues,
00:31:22 --> 00:31:26: mental health or addiction issues or employment or other health
00:31:26 --> 00:31:26: issues.
00:31:26 --> 00:31:28: They get connected to support.
00:31:28 --> 00:31:31: They enter retraining and in a few years say they
00:31:32 --> 00:31:34: get a red seal in the trades.
00:31:34 --> 00:31:37: Then again, a well paid middle class job and they
00:31:37 --> 00:31:40: move out of the modular housing and into market rental,
00:31:40 --> 00:31:43: say. Now this isn't just a nice story,
00:31:43 --> 00:31:46: this is actually a story that a guy told me
00:31:46 --> 00:31:48: while I was on the Sky train.
00:31:48 --> 00:31:51: He had his tool belt on and he walked through
00:31:51 --> 00:31:52: his entire.
00:31:52 --> 00:31:55: The last three years of his life,
00:31:55 --> 00:31:57: and so this is what really?
00:31:57 --> 00:32:00: The vision is is to get folks help.
00:32:00 --> 00:32:03: They need to get out of the bed situation they're
00:32:03 --> 00:32:06: in and get them back into being productive members of
00:32:06 --> 00:32:07: the economy,
00:32:07 --> 00:32:09: which is great for everybody,
00:32:09 --> 00:32:13: and we've approved more than 750 these temporary modular homes.
00:32:13 --> 00:32:15: And we're bringing in 350 permanent ones.

00:32:15 --> 00:32:19: Thanks to these government partnerships.
00:32:19 --> 00:32:20: And so if you think about that,
00:32:20 --> 00:32:23: that's 1100 opportunities to tell the same story.
00:32:23 --> 00:32:25: And as we have turnover in these units,
00:32:25 --> 00:32:28: this is thousands of people that can get their lives
00:32:28 --> 00:32:29: back on track.
00:32:32 --> 00:32:35: The next story is about a renter.
00:32:35 --> 00:32:40: So imagine the two low wage earners say minimum wage.
00:32:40 --> 00:32:42: They can't live in Vancouver,
00:32:42 --> 00:32:45: so they're commuting into town one hour each in each
00:32:45 --> 00:32:46: direction.
00:32:46 --> 00:32:48: So four hours combined. Everyday commuting,
00:32:48 --> 00:32:50: one works in a restaurant kitchen,
00:32:50 --> 00:32:54: the other one cleans at the hospital.
00:32:54 --> 00:32:57: However, if they get one of the Merc units that
00:32:57 --> 00:32:58: we've built,
00:32:58 --> 00:33:01: they can now walk to work.
00:33:01 --> 00:33:05: So between them they'll be making just over $60,000 a
00:33:05 --> 00:33:05: year,
00:33:05 --> 00:33:09: meaning their one bedroom middle income unit that rents at
00:33:09 --> 00:33:10: 1200 bucks a month.
00:33:10 --> 00:33:12: That's a murp rent rent level.
00:33:12 --> 00:33:14: They can start saving money,
00:33:14 --> 00:33:17: and in fact they can save around 500 bucks a
00:33:17 --> 00:33:17: month,
00:33:17 --> 00:33:19: so they're also saving time.
00:33:19 --> 00:33:22: And instead of commuting 4 hours a day,
00:33:22 --> 00:33:25: there are spending just 45 minutes between home and work,
00:33:25 --> 00:33:28: so they're saving time. They're saving money,
00:33:28 --> 00:33:30: and they can save, you know,
00:33:30 --> 00:33:32: build, build a future with that.
00:33:32 --> 00:33:34: And that is really the hope with the Murphy units
00:33:34 --> 00:33:37: is that we can get workers living in the communities
00:33:37 --> 00:33:38: where they're working,
00:33:38 --> 00:33:39: and they can have better lives.
00:33:39 --> 00:33:43: Which is better for the whole community?
00:33:43 --> 00:33:46: The last story lady went is the ownership story.
00:33:46 --> 00:33:49: So if you can imagine a family that arrived in
00:33:50 --> 00:33:53: Canada in the 1970s and they didn't have a lot
00:33:53 --> 00:33:57: of anything but they managed to scrape enough together and
00:33:57 --> 00:34:00: work hard enough to buy a house in East Band
00:34:00 --> 00:34:01: for say 200,000 bucks.

00:34:01 --> 00:34:05: But now their kids all have well paying jobs,
00:34:05 --> 00:34:08: have to move up the Surry or to Maple Ridge
00:34:08 --> 00:34:10: to make a go of it.
00:34:10 --> 00:34:13: But if we can get making home passed through Council
00:34:13 --> 00:34:17: and start these pilot projects and I hope expanded this
00:34:17 --> 00:34:19: family could turn their home,
00:34:19 --> 00:34:22: this one single detached home into four homes.
00:34:22 --> 00:34:26: One of these homes can be for the the owners,
00:34:26 --> 00:34:28: the parents to age in place.
00:34:28 --> 00:34:31: Two could be for the kids who could finally buy
00:34:31 --> 00:34:35: a house in Vancouver and one that's permanently affordable and
00:34:35 --> 00:34:36: on market.
00:34:36 --> 00:34:40: Affordable homeownership that gives a chance to another immigrant.
00:34:40 --> 00:34:45: Family it was much like the original family starting out
00:34:45 --> 00:34:47: in Vancouver all those years ago.
00:34:47 --> 00:34:51: So this is really a much more effective use of
00:34:51 --> 00:34:56: of the land and doesn't benefit the large developers benefits
00:34:56 --> 00:34:59: the small homeowners as small small.
00:34:59 --> 00:35:05: Small builders and you can imagine we have 68,000.
00:35:05 --> 00:35:09: Single family homes. Single detached homes going for about 2,000,000
00:35:09 --> 00:35:10: or more dollars each.
00:35:10 --> 00:35:13: But you can imagine what we could do if we
00:35:13 --> 00:35:15: could get this policy across the city.
00:35:15 --> 00:35:17: We could create 10s of thousands of new homes,
00:35:17 --> 00:35:20: many of which are permanently affordable.
00:35:20 --> 00:35:23: That is removed from the market and remove forever from
00:35:23 --> 00:35:24: speculation.
00:35:24 --> 00:35:27: So I don't think when people talk about homeownership,
00:35:27 --> 00:35:29: they're asking for it to be easy there,
00:35:29 --> 00:35:32: just asking it. For it to be possible,
00:35:32 --> 00:35:35: and I do think that what we're doing now is
00:35:35 --> 00:35:36: making it impossible,
00:35:36 --> 00:35:37: so I know we can do this.
00:35:37 --> 00:35:40: I know that I think we've got the policy's ideas
00:35:40 --> 00:35:41: that we need.
00:35:41 --> 00:35:43: They've been proven in other places,
00:35:43 --> 00:35:45: and we just have to have the will to put
00:35:45 --> 00:35:46: them in place.
00:35:46 --> 00:35:48: So with the with the economic boom,
00:35:48 --> 00:35:50: that's going to come post covid,

00:35:50 --> 00:35:53: I think we have the money the capital is available
00:35:53 --> 00:35:54: to do all this.
00:35:54 --> 00:35:57: It's just up to us to build a Vancouver that
00:35:57 --> 00:35:59: works for everyone.
00:35:59 --> 00:36:01: So it's super weird just talking to my computer,
00:36:01 --> 00:36:04: so I am looking forward to hear somebody else's voice.
00:36:04 --> 00:36:06: So thanks so much for your time and I look
00:36:06 --> 00:36:08: forward to your questions.
00:36:13 --> 00:36:16: And I think Shannon just changed the spotlight off and
00:36:16 --> 00:36:17: there we go.
00:36:17 --> 00:36:20: Well, thanks very much. Mayor Stewart for that information.
00:36:20 --> 00:36:22: And I you know, as you said,
00:36:22 --> 00:36:25: I'm excited to get into a bit of a conversation.
00:36:25 --> 00:36:27: I do think you know it's been interesting.
00:36:27 --> 00:36:29: You know you. I'm sure there was no way you
00:36:29 --> 00:36:32: could have predicted when he ran for mayor that you'd
00:36:32 --> 00:36:35: be dealing with the crisis quite like this along with
00:36:35 --> 00:36:38: all the other challenges we were facing.
00:36:38 --> 00:36:40: When you, when you started office in 2018.
00:36:40 --> 00:36:43: So it's, it's certainly. Interesting to say the least,
00:36:43 --> 00:36:46: but you know, I think it shows that you know
00:36:46 --> 00:36:48: in a time of crisis we could do big things
00:36:48 --> 00:36:50: here in Canada and around the world.
00:36:50 --> 00:36:52: But in Canada and NBC.
00:36:52 --> 00:36:55: So hopefully we can use this as an opportunity to
00:36:55 --> 00:36:58: say to start tackling some of these things but too,
00:36:58 --> 00:37:00: but using that as a jumping off point,
00:37:00 --> 00:37:03: I wanted to introduce our sort of moderate Aranda Fireside
00:37:03 --> 00:37:05: Chat partner for you for this afternoon.
00:37:05 --> 00:37:08: Darcy Matheson is the chief editor of the Daily Hive
00:37:08 --> 00:37:10: and is joining us for her first,
00:37:10 --> 00:37:13: but hopefully not last. You lied BC event.
00:37:13 --> 00:37:15: And so we're going to pass it over to Darcy
00:37:15 --> 00:37:16: to to lead us through a bit of a chat
00:37:16 --> 00:37:18: between the mayor and herself.
00:37:18 --> 00:37:20: But we are going to get to as many audience
00:37:20 --> 00:37:21: questions as we can.
00:37:21 --> 00:37:23: So for those of you who might not be familiar
00:37:23 --> 00:37:24: or may have forgotten,
00:37:24 --> 00:37:26: we do have the Q&A function at the bottom of
00:37:26 --> 00:37:26: the screen.
00:37:26 --> 00:37:29: There you can type in your questions there and Darcy

00:37:29 --> 00:37:31: will do her best to either weave them into the
00:37:31 --> 00:37:33: conversation or ask as many things you can.
00:37:33 --> 00:37:34: We probably won't get to all of them,
00:37:34 --> 00:37:37: but will collect the questions and see if we can
00:37:37 --> 00:37:38: kind of get some response.
00:37:38 --> 00:37:39: Post the event. But for now,
00:37:39 --> 00:37:40: I'll pass it over to you,
00:37:40 --> 00:37:43: Darcy, and I'll be back closer to the top of
00:37:43 --> 00:37:44: the hour.
00:37:44 --> 00:37:46: Great, thanks so much for having me and thanks for
00:37:46 --> 00:37:47: joining us.
00:37:47 --> 00:37:49: Mary Stuart.
00:37:49 --> 00:37:52: I'm really excited about everything you have planned in terms
00:37:52 --> 00:37:55: of housing for the city coming up and one of
00:37:55 --> 00:37:58: the things I wanted to ask you about was density.
00:37:58 --> 00:38:00: An increasing density in the city?
00:38:00 --> 00:38:04: You know, it's something that we hear that perhaps increasing
00:38:04 --> 00:38:05: supply can really help.
00:38:05 --> 00:38:09: So right now there's dozens and dozens of towers,
00:38:09 --> 00:38:10: say 3040, even 50 stories tall,
00:38:10 --> 00:38:13: being built near suburban Sky train stations.
00:38:13 --> 00:38:17: Look at Brentwood Burquitlam, even sorry these are Heights and
00:38:17 --> 00:38:19: densities that seem almost.
00:38:19 --> 00:38:21: Unimaginable for stations near Vancouver.
00:38:21 --> 00:38:23: Despite this being the core city,
00:38:23 --> 00:38:27: how is this being addressed for the Broadway Corridor when
00:38:27 --> 00:38:29: we're looking at the Broadway plan?
00:38:29 --> 00:38:32: And could you see one of these tallest towers being
00:38:32 --> 00:38:33: built in Vancouver?
00:38:33 --> 00:38:35: Yeah, I yeah, that's a great question.
00:38:35 --> 00:38:38: You know, I think I had a conversation with Mr
00:38:38 --> 00:38:42: Catherine McKenna federally and and you know who's the infrastructure
00:38:42 --> 00:38:44: minister talking about all the investments,
00:38:44 --> 00:38:46: including Sky trains. And really,
00:38:46 --> 00:38:49: I think the feds are starting to really connect the
00:38:49 --> 00:38:51: dots between housing,
00:38:51 --> 00:38:54: affordability and transit. Investment and are now saying,
00:38:54 --> 00:38:56: you know you're not going to get.
00:38:56 --> 00:39:00: You're not gonna get the investment if you don't densify.
00:39:00 --> 00:39:03: So I do think there's a possibility we are seeing

00:39:03 --> 00:39:03: along Broadway.
00:39:03 --> 00:39:07: For example, we built a murp we improved emerged that
00:39:07 --> 00:39:09: was 28 stories tall along Broadway.
00:39:09 --> 00:39:11: A little contentious, but still passed,
00:39:11 --> 00:39:14: which is great. And I do think there's a potential.
00:39:14 --> 00:39:17: I do think there's multiple ways to densify though,
00:39:17 --> 00:39:20: so there are cities that you know,
00:39:20 --> 00:39:22: I think a healthy mix is the way you have
00:39:22 --> 00:39:22: to go,
00:39:22 --> 00:39:25: but. But density is is the way there the one
00:39:25 --> 00:39:27: thing to remember is 70%
00:39:27 --> 00:39:30: of the landmass in Vancouver is only for a single
00:39:30 --> 00:39:31: detached homes.
00:39:31 --> 00:39:34: And that is definitely another place where we can move
00:39:34 --> 00:39:35: to densify.
00:39:35 --> 00:39:38: So you provide choice for people so they can live
00:39:38 --> 00:39:39: in the tower.
00:39:39 --> 00:39:40: So I live in a tower.
00:39:40 --> 00:39:42: I love it. You know 25 floors up but you
00:39:42 --> 00:39:45: know some folks want to be closer to the ground,
00:39:45 --> 00:39:48: but so if you're making home proposals that is a
00:39:48 --> 00:39:50: possibility of densifying there.
00:39:50 --> 00:39:53: But we, we have to explore all these avenues and
00:39:53 --> 00:39:54: enable them.
00:39:54 --> 00:39:57: And that is the one problem we're having is we're
00:39:57 --> 00:40:01: kind of stuck in a 1990s planning regime here in
00:40:01 --> 00:40:02: the city,
00:40:02 --> 00:40:04: and that has to change.
00:40:04 --> 00:40:07: You know one of the things you talked on about
00:40:07 --> 00:40:10: is modernization of the permitting process at the city.
00:40:10 --> 00:40:13: You know, bringing us into to a newer era,
00:40:13 --> 00:40:16: and you know developers have taken issue with the lengthy
00:40:16 --> 00:40:19: permit delays that have faced in some cases,
00:40:19 --> 00:40:23: resulting in cancelling proposals before they even reach the application
00:40:23 --> 00:40:24: stage.
00:40:24 --> 00:40:27: And I know we've recently heard about the food banks
00:40:27 --> 00:40:30: to distribution hubs caught up in the permitting process.
00:40:30 --> 00:40:34: How do you see permitting for Vancouver factoring into future
00:40:34 --> 00:40:36: development coming out of covid?
00:40:36 --> 00:40:39: And what are those plans to speed up and cut
00:40:39 --> 00:40:43: tape to build faster as the pandemic ends?

00:40:43 --> 00:40:47: Yeah, I, I'm I completely agree that you know,
00:40:47 --> 00:40:49: if we're going to be a global city,
00:40:49 --> 00:40:51: we have to act like one.
00:40:51 --> 00:40:55: And I don't feel like we're there yet.
00:40:55 --> 00:40:56: So.
00:40:56 --> 00:40:59: You know, I the way I start all relationships as
00:40:59 --> 00:41:02: I give the people of my trust right away and
00:41:02 --> 00:41:05: and if that trust doesn't work out,
00:41:05 --> 00:41:07: then I move on and I think I put a
00:41:07 --> 00:41:10: lot of trust in what was happening at the city
00:41:10 --> 00:41:13: and kind of thought it was rolling along.
00:41:13 --> 00:41:16: And then after I started to get to know the
00:41:16 --> 00:41:17: community I saw it.
00:41:17 --> 00:41:20: Wow, this is this is not working.
00:41:20 --> 00:41:23: And so for example the motion I put forward to
00:41:23 --> 00:41:24: create a backlog,
00:41:24 --> 00:41:27: inventory that Council back unanimously.
00:41:27 --> 00:41:30: Is that unusual step? And I think that you know
00:41:30 --> 00:41:32: it's been pointed out in in media sources.
00:41:32 --> 00:41:36: Otherwise why is the American involved in something that should
00:41:36 --> 00:41:39: be a routine business of the planning Department?
00:41:39 --> 00:41:42: And it's to do with my concern with exactly what
00:41:42 --> 00:41:43: you're talking about.
00:41:43 --> 00:41:46: So if we can't even get information about how bad
00:41:46 --> 00:41:49: the backlog is on a routine basis,
00:41:49 --> 00:41:51: then we're never going to fix it.
00:41:51 --> 00:41:53: And so this is the first step in,
00:41:53 --> 00:41:56: at least. Especially on large rental projects that we we
00:41:56 --> 00:41:58: all know that we need here.
00:41:58 --> 00:42:00: And are and I think Council is is ready to,
00:42:00 --> 00:42:03: you know, fair public hearing process.
00:42:03 --> 00:42:07: But overall are very very interested in rental housing investments.
00:42:07 --> 00:42:09: So that's one side of it.
00:42:09 --> 00:42:12: It's it's making sure that we can see what stuck
00:42:12 --> 00:42:13: and get it unstuck.
00:42:13 --> 00:42:16: But there's the other side which is the development permits
00:42:16 --> 00:42:20: the building permits and we have a terrific staff person
00:42:20 --> 00:42:22: now in charge of the Department.
00:42:22 --> 00:42:25: Jesse Adcock, who comes from the private sector Royal Bank
00:42:26 --> 00:42:28: who worked on all those systems there.

00:42:28 --> 00:42:30: So I really think with.
00:42:30 --> 00:42:31: With our team in place,
00:42:31 --> 00:42:34: now that we're going to turn the corner on this
00:42:34 --> 00:42:34: this year,
00:42:34 --> 00:42:37: but it is essential and we have to act like
00:42:37 --> 00:42:39: we want people to build stuff or or they're not
00:42:39 --> 00:42:40: going to build it.
00:42:42 --> 00:42:45: That's great, so why don't we pivot for a minute
00:42:45 --> 00:42:47: and talk about the downtown core?
00:42:47 --> 00:42:51: You know, downtown Vancouver, Chinatown Gastown is really the heart
00:42:51 --> 00:42:54: of the city and many people believe it's been hollowed
00:42:54 --> 00:42:55: out because of the pandemic.
00:42:55 --> 00:42:58: Obviously we don't have the tourists coming in,
00:42:58 --> 00:43:01: no ones going out to restaurants and bars here.
00:43:01 --> 00:43:03: We're seeing a ton of restaurants closed.
00:43:03 --> 00:43:06: The Irish Heather said this week they are going to
00:43:06 --> 00:43:09: be relocating after more than 20 years and there is
00:43:09 --> 00:43:12: concerns about increasing crimes in those neighborhoods as well.
00:43:12 --> 00:43:17: Just wondering how is the city looking to attract businesses
00:43:17 --> 00:43:20: back to the region spur growth and make people feel
00:43:20 --> 00:43:23: safe to travel to the core again?
00:43:23 --> 00:43:26: Yeah, I think that I think you're absolutely right.
00:43:26 --> 00:43:30: The Covid has had impacted everybody and sometimes you gotta
00:43:30 --> 00:43:32: zoom out a bit and see how it's really hit
00:43:33 --> 00:43:33: all cities.
00:43:33 --> 00:43:36: So advantage. I mean, the C-40 Mayors Group,
00:43:36 --> 00:43:39: which is, you know, all the big cities in the
00:43:39 --> 00:43:39: world,
00:43:39 --> 00:43:41: Los Angeles, New York, London,
00:43:41 --> 00:43:45: Paris, and we have regular meetings where we discuss basically
00:43:45 --> 00:43:48: how this is happening to every major city and what
00:43:48 --> 00:43:51: what ideas can we share to combat it?
00:43:51 --> 00:43:53: The number one thing to combat it is.
00:43:53 --> 00:43:56: Get jabs in peoples arms so we can get vaccinated
00:43:56 --> 00:43:59: and kind of get back to a regular routine.
00:43:59 --> 00:44:01: So as I said at the opening,
00:44:01 --> 00:44:05: that's been the number one concern for me is to.
00:44:05 --> 00:44:08: Combat COVID-19 as effectively as we can,
00:44:08 --> 00:44:11: and so again allowing restaurants and bars to stay open

00:44:11 --> 00:44:15: in Vancouver is made a big difference they would compare
00:44:15 --> 00:44:18: to Toronto or Montreal where they've been closed.
00:44:18 --> 00:44:23: However, people are right, there is changing patterns of crime
00:44:23 --> 00:44:24: in the city.
00:44:24 --> 00:44:26: How do we get people downtown?
00:44:26 --> 00:44:30: I mean I I meet regularly with the business associations
00:44:30 --> 00:44:33: and asked that very question because they're the experts,
00:44:33 --> 00:44:36: not me. And what I've been told is all the
00:44:36 --> 00:44:37: regular events we have,
00:44:37 --> 00:44:40: make sure that they are up and running as they
00:44:40 --> 00:44:42: as soon as they can be,
00:44:42 --> 00:44:45: which with as much support from the city as as
00:44:45 --> 00:44:46: we could offer.
00:44:46 --> 00:44:47: So that is Pride Parade,
00:44:47 --> 00:44:50: Festival of lights.
00:44:50 --> 00:44:52: Races in Gastown like bike races.
00:44:52 --> 00:44:55: Whatever, we you know, whatever we can do,
00:44:55 --> 00:44:57: that is probably the best thing,
00:44:57 --> 00:44:59: but right now it's just.
00:44:59 --> 00:45:03: Realizing that until the health order is lifted,
00:45:03 --> 00:45:06: it is it. We're just going to have to to
00:45:06 --> 00:45:08: bear it out a bit longer,
00:45:08 --> 00:45:11: but I think getting ready for the rebound is is
00:45:11 --> 00:45:12: the key.
00:45:12 --> 00:45:16: Be ready to go as soon as the health orders
00:45:16 --> 00:45:19: lifted to move and get things humming again.
00:45:19 --> 00:45:21: Well, let's talk about that.
00:45:21 --> 00:45:23: In getting ready. Talk about post pandemic,
00:45:23 --> 00:45:27: you know, looking at somewhere like Israel where we're seeing
00:45:27 --> 00:45:30: the majority of people are vaccinated now they have a
00:45:30 --> 00:45:31: vaccine passport system.
00:45:31 --> 00:45:34: We're seeing up to 500 people at a concert,
00:45:34 --> 00:45:36: which right now blows my mind.
00:45:36 --> 00:45:39: Being in Vancouver and not seeing people for weeks at
00:45:39 --> 00:45:39: a time.
00:45:39 --> 00:45:42: But you know, it does seem like just societally we
00:45:42 --> 00:45:45: have this pent up demand for things to get like
00:45:45 --> 00:45:47: quote back to normal and a lot of that is
00:45:47 --> 00:45:50: that that fun stuff. The concert starts.
00:45:50 --> 00:45:53: Tourism travel. How does Vancouver as a city support those
00:45:53 --> 00:45:55: things like pride like fireworks?

00:45:55 --> 00:45:58: You know, take advantage of that euphoria.
00:45:58 --> 00:46:01: How? What is the city gonna do to support those
00:46:01 --> 00:46:01: events?
00:46:01 --> 00:46:05: Well, you know I've been focused on thinking it after
00:46:05 --> 00:46:08: we kind of got through the first couple of months.
00:46:08 --> 00:46:11: Where was like surviving health wise in my mind,
00:46:11 --> 00:46:15: immediately flipped to the economic recovery and we had a
00:46:15 --> 00:46:18: we had a good committee at the Council Committee about
00:46:19 --> 00:46:21: looking at exploring all kinds of options.
00:46:21 --> 00:46:25: For me it's just getting the nuts and bolts right,
00:46:25 --> 00:46:28: so people wait less time for permits and the things
00:46:28 --> 00:46:30: they need to get to get going.
00:46:30 --> 00:46:35: Seeing what the provincial and federal governments will chip in
00:46:35 --> 00:46:37: in terms of helping US fund.
00:46:37 --> 00:46:39: Maybe new stuff, maybe older.
00:46:39 --> 00:46:42: You know things we already do very well that those
00:46:42 --> 00:46:43: are those are,
00:46:43 --> 00:46:47: you know and you only get that through advocacy.
00:46:47 --> 00:46:49: Those kind of investments in dollars.
00:46:49 --> 00:46:51: But I. You know, I,
00:46:51 --> 00:46:53: I do think it again.
00:46:53 --> 00:46:55: It just comes down to being ready to to to
00:46:55 --> 00:46:58: hit the ground running as as soon as we get
00:46:58 --> 00:47:01: the orders and we see things are coming faster than
00:47:01 --> 00:47:04: ever, but but really, listening to business owners is is
00:47:04 --> 00:47:06: a key because again it it.
00:47:06 --> 00:47:09: Most of the stuff is market driven and and the
00:47:09 --> 00:47:11: market knows where that where they want,
00:47:11 --> 00:47:15: where the money you know should land and that's that's
00:47:15 --> 00:47:17: what we're trying to do.
00:47:17 --> 00:47:20: And I just wanted to talk to you a little
00:47:20 --> 00:47:21: bit about False Creek South,
00:47:21 --> 00:47:24: you know, looking at the future of the city and
00:47:24 --> 00:47:25: you know,
00:47:25 --> 00:47:28: now we're looking at public input about the vision and
00:47:28 --> 00:47:30: potential future redevelopment.
00:47:30 --> 00:47:33: You know. Thinking about the roots of that area,
00:47:33 --> 00:47:36: when those when it was envisioned was very diverse,
00:47:36 --> 00:47:39: very family oriented, lots of co-ops.
00:47:39 --> 00:47:42: How do you keep that spirit alive when now we're
00:47:42 --> 00:47:45: looking at development in in future decades to be able

00:47:45 --> 00:47:46: to do that?
00:47:46 --> 00:47:47: When, as you said, it's.
00:47:47 --> 00:47:51: A struggle for even middle to high income earners to
00:47:51 --> 00:47:53: live in the city.
00:47:53 --> 00:47:55: Yeah, I think you know what was done there in
00:47:55 --> 00:47:59: the 70s was a very innovative thing that was recognized
00:47:59 --> 00:48:03: internationally and so you know keeping that spirit alive.
00:48:03 --> 00:48:06: However, when you look at the density in those areas,
00:48:06 --> 00:48:09: it's it's very, very valuable and a great place to
00:48:09 --> 00:48:10: live,
00:48:10 --> 00:48:13: but also it's working with the with those folks are
00:48:13 --> 00:48:14: already living there.
00:48:14 --> 00:48:16: The co-ops of the strata,
00:48:16 --> 00:48:19: homeowners that are on what is a huge parcel of
00:48:19 --> 00:48:22: city land to making sure that we can add density.
00:48:22 --> 00:48:24: They're in a way that's that,
00:48:24 --> 00:48:26: kind of.
00:48:26 --> 00:48:29: You know acknowledges and carries on the spirit of the
00:48:29 --> 00:48:31: original investments,
00:48:31 --> 00:48:33: so you know been very involved in negotiations.
00:48:33 --> 00:48:36: It's it's a lot of leases that were all signed
00:48:36 --> 00:48:39: at different times under different conditions,
00:48:39 --> 00:48:42: so it's an extremely complicated.
00:48:42 --> 00:48:44: You know process to work out.
00:48:44 --> 00:48:47: I have to say I really feel like the trust
00:48:47 --> 00:48:50: had been broken there and it's taken some time to
00:48:50 --> 00:48:53: rebuild it and I give a lot of credit to
00:48:53 --> 00:48:56: the trust building going with the Tom Armstrong or the
00:48:56 --> 00:49:00: Cooperative Housing Federation of British Columbia and Jill had key
00:49:00 --> 00:49:05: from the nonprofit Housing Association to kind of bring together
00:49:05 --> 00:49:08: all the partners to figure out how can we maximize
00:49:08 --> 00:49:12: both the opportunities for the entire city while seeking to.
00:49:12 --> 00:49:16: You know, in some ways preserve the spirit of of
00:49:16 --> 00:49:17: what that land is,
00:49:17 --> 00:49:19: and I think we're very close,
00:49:19 --> 00:49:22: so I think this year you will be seeing proposals
00:49:22 --> 00:49:24: that are being negotiated now.
00:49:24 --> 00:49:27: And yeah, I'm excited from what I've seen.
00:49:27 --> 00:49:30: I think it's it's looking very good and you know,
00:49:30 --> 00:49:32: it could give more hope.

00:49:32 --> 00:49:35: The folks that want to stay in this city and
00:49:35 --> 00:49:39: and and different choices in terms of how they live
00:49:39 --> 00:49:40: here.
00:49:40 --> 00:49:42: So you hear that you heard it here.
00:49:42 --> 00:49:44: First watch this space for more.
00:49:44 --> 00:49:45: Thank you very much merit.
00:49:45 --> 00:49:48: So I think we should have time for about two
00:49:48 --> 00:49:49: or three questions.
00:49:49 --> 00:49:51: Kind of wrapping down the hour.
00:49:51 --> 00:49:54: So I'm going to go to some of the supplied
00:49:54 --> 00:49:57: questions from our Q&A and the first is recently it
00:49:57 --> 00:50:00: took five or six nights of public hearings to get
00:50:00 --> 00:50:03: 35 new rental homes approved in kits.
00:50:03 --> 00:50:06: How will we ever solve the rental housing supply if
00:50:06 --> 00:50:09: it takes hours of council time per unit?
00:50:09 --> 00:50:12: And if the local. Owners can block it.
00:50:12 --> 00:50:16: Great question and I chair every public hearing so I
00:50:16 --> 00:50:19: am very well aware of the length of these.
00:50:19 --> 00:50:22: You know folks that really want change folks that are
00:50:22 --> 00:50:24: resistant to change.
00:50:24 --> 00:50:27: I do think it's an important part of the Democratic
00:50:27 --> 00:50:30: process to to maintain public hearings,
00:50:30 --> 00:50:32: and in fact it's required by law.
00:50:32 --> 00:50:35: But as I'm sitting there listening to what people are
00:50:35 --> 00:50:36: saying,
00:50:36 --> 00:50:39: what strikes me is not a few hours that we're
00:50:39 --> 00:50:41: spending hearing people's views,
00:50:41 --> 00:50:43: but the four or five years.
00:50:43 --> 00:50:46: It took for that project to get in front of
00:50:46 --> 00:50:46: us.
00:50:46 --> 00:50:49: And that is. So what I think is.
00:50:49 --> 00:50:53: You know, perhaps we could find ways to make the
00:50:53 --> 00:50:56: public hearing process is a little less confrontational.
00:50:56 --> 00:50:59: But The thing is, what we really have to do
00:50:59 --> 00:51:03: is get these projects in front of Council for decision
00:51:03 --> 00:51:04: much faster.
00:51:04 --> 00:51:06: So I think every proponent of a project,
00:51:06 --> 00:51:10: even if they're rejected, which rarely happens.
00:51:10 --> 00:51:13: That if they got the decision two or three years
00:51:14 --> 00:51:14: earlier,
00:51:14 --> 00:51:16: it would be much better,
00:51:16 --> 00:51:20: so again. It is the public face of what's happening

00:51:20 --> 00:51:21: in terms of rezoning,
00:51:21 --> 00:51:25: but what is not public is how long these projects
00:51:25 --> 00:51:27: are taking to get to the Council.
00:51:27 --> 00:51:31: This official quasi judicial hearing process so so I would
00:51:31 --> 00:51:34: say focus less on the on the on the public
00:51:34 --> 00:51:37: hearing benefit focus more on the on the process by
00:51:37 --> 00:51:41: which these projects are or are not making it for
00:51:41 --> 00:51:42: consideration.
00:51:42 --> 00:51:45: So that's that's really how my change of mind is
00:51:45 --> 00:51:46: changed over this.
00:51:46 --> 00:51:49: Just over two years doing this.
00:51:49 --> 00:51:52: Thank you for that. So as you mentioned,
00:51:52 --> 00:51:54: there have been some big shakeups at City Hall.
00:51:54 --> 00:51:57: I know there were layoffs and then during the pandemic
00:51:57 --> 00:52:00: we saw the exit of the city manager and the
00:52:00 --> 00:52:02: recent departure of the city's chief planner.
00:52:02 --> 00:52:06: So we did have a question from a participant asking
00:52:06 --> 00:52:10: what are you looking for in a new Chief planner?
00:52:10 --> 00:52:13: Well, for me it's fundamentals I I'm so excited to
00:52:13 --> 00:52:14: Treasa.
00:52:14 --> 00:52:17: Donnell is now at the interim head of planning at
00:52:17 --> 00:52:20: the experience she brings from City of Dallas,
00:52:20 --> 00:52:23: which is much larger than Vancouver.
00:52:23 --> 00:52:26: And what she did in Dallas is she did exactly
00:52:26 --> 00:52:29: what we need to do here is modernized the the
00:52:29 --> 00:52:30: approval process.
00:52:30 --> 00:52:32: Whether it's business you know,
00:52:32 --> 00:52:36: whether it you know mostly on the planning side there
00:52:36 --> 00:52:40: and so moving it from a paper based electronic based
00:52:40 --> 00:52:41: system.
00:52:41 --> 00:52:44: She's the right person for this job and I am
00:52:44 --> 00:52:48: so excited about changing the system by which we all
00:52:48 --> 00:52:51: are housing flows so that is get the nuts and
00:52:51 --> 00:52:57: bolts rating and Tris is the right person for this
00:52:57 --> 00:52:57: job.
00:52:57 --> 00:52:59: What what I what I feel is,
00:52:59 --> 00:53:03: you know the democratically elected body that the mayor and
00:53:03 --> 00:53:06: Council are there to set the direction and to do
00:53:06 --> 00:53:07: what?
00:53:07 --> 00:53:09: What the public elected to do so when I was
00:53:10 --> 00:53:13: elected to do was to deliver a lot of housing.
00:53:13 --> 00:53:14: And so that's my job.

00:53:14 --> 00:53:17: I feel that the vision that I put forward through
00:53:17 --> 00:53:21: the election was elected on it and now just need
00:53:21 --> 00:53:22: to carry it through.
00:53:22 --> 00:53:25: But I need. I think we need to retool our
00:53:25 --> 00:53:28: civil service in order to get that done.
00:53:28 --> 00:53:31: And I do feel like we have the components in
00:53:31 --> 00:53:31: place,
00:53:31 --> 00:53:34: both the trees that Donald now is the interim head
00:53:34 --> 00:53:37: of planning an with Jesse Adcock dealing with the other
00:53:37 --> 00:53:39: permits and licenses I think,
00:53:39 --> 00:53:42: and with all Mccree as the interim city Manager,
00:53:42 --> 00:53:45: I think my meetings with them or are very positive.
00:53:45 --> 00:53:48: I feel like we're all on the same page and
00:53:48 --> 00:53:51: councils on that same page like this is where we're
00:53:51 --> 00:53:54: all united is to is to do this structural change
00:53:54 --> 00:53:57: and you know it's not the same as building an
00:53:57 --> 00:53:59: Empire State Building or something,
00:53:59 --> 00:54:03: but it's probably more important is is too.
00:54:03 --> 00:54:05: Is to get stuff through faster and to make sure
00:54:06 --> 00:54:09: we're making the right decisions as well as making sure
00:54:09 --> 00:54:12: the public have confidence in the process and that's you
00:54:12 --> 00:54:16: know that's the challenge we've taken on and I'm really
00:54:16 --> 00:54:19: looking forward to this year is to is showing people
00:54:19 --> 00:54:21: how that change is going to happen.
00:54:23 --> 00:54:26: I think one of the things that you discussed that
00:54:26 --> 00:54:29: got people's ears perked up over this hour was the
00:54:29 --> 00:54:30: moderate income rentals.
00:54:30 --> 00:54:33: I think the ones that you said that would be
00:54:33 --> 00:54:36: tide to a certain amount so we have a question
00:54:36 --> 00:54:38: for the moderate income rentals.
00:54:38 --> 00:54:41: Are inflation based increases allowed or will the owner or
00:54:41 --> 00:54:45: other market renters in the building affectively have to subsidize
00:54:45 --> 00:54:46: these units 2%
00:54:46 --> 00:54:49: more every year?
00:54:49 --> 00:54:51: No, you know there's this is part of what we're
00:54:51 --> 00:54:52: working on.
00:54:52 --> 00:54:54: Is the financing model, but again,
00:54:54 --> 00:54:57: the developers would get extra density in order to make
00:54:58 --> 00:54:58: this happen.
00:54:58 --> 00:55:01: So the the really the financing is done on the
00:55:01 --> 00:55:05: front end during the approvals were of course also

constrained
00:55:05 --> 00:55:08: by the provincial limits of of rent increases.
00:55:08 --> 00:55:11: But what's been great through this process is they've gone
00:55:11 --> 00:55:15: from theory to practice is that developers are actually putting
00:55:15 --> 00:55:19: their money where their mouth is and putting their performance
00:55:19 --> 00:55:23: together. Uh, getting them approved and now getting shovels in
00:55:23 --> 00:55:26: the ground to get these things built and and that's
00:55:26 --> 00:55:29: what pilot programs are really for,
00:55:29 --> 00:55:32: is to stop sitting around tables and talking about stuff
00:55:32 --> 00:55:35: and get stuff built and then review it and see
00:55:35 --> 00:55:37: how the program needs to be,
00:55:37 --> 00:55:39: you know?
00:55:39 --> 00:55:42: I guess tinkered with or or adjusted before making it
00:55:42 --> 00:55:43: permanent,
00:55:43 --> 00:55:44: but so far so good.
00:55:44 --> 00:55:46: I mean I have talked to all the all the
00:55:46 --> 00:55:49: folks who have had buildings approved there.
00:55:49 --> 00:55:50: There really happy with it.
00:55:50 --> 00:55:53: Very proud of their contribution to the community too,
00:55:53 --> 00:55:56: because a lot of the folks investing in these verbs
00:55:56 --> 00:55:59: are our local builders and they see the problems that
00:55:59 --> 00:56:01: we're facing and want to help.
00:56:01 --> 00:56:03: So I think it's a total win.
00:56:03 --> 00:56:05: And the more of these things we could get built
00:56:05 --> 00:56:08: and I see other places copying this program now,
00:56:08 --> 00:56:11: so that's a good very good sign.
00:56:11 --> 00:56:13: That is a good sign.
00:56:13 --> 00:56:16: So we have a question about the Making homes pilot
00:56:16 --> 00:56:19: policy and the question is can you speak to why
00:56:19 --> 00:56:23: you think Council rejected the Making homes pilot policy.
00:56:23 --> 00:56:27: I believe innovative policies and coming up with Creative Solutions
00:56:27 --> 00:56:31: to adding density and utilizing square footage lots can help
00:56:31 --> 00:56:32: create a more vibrant city.
00:56:32 --> 00:56:36: Is Council potentially waiting for the citywide plan to be
00:56:36 --> 00:56:39: created before considering densifying square footage?
00:56:39 --> 00:56:41: Lots, for example.
00:56:41 --> 00:56:44: You know I can't speak to why it was rejected.
00:56:44 --> 00:56:48: I, you know, I think Christine Boyle for for her
00:56:48 --> 00:56:48: support.
00:56:48 --> 00:56:51: That was great. You know what it was?

00:56:51 --> 00:56:54: It's just kicked down the road so you know I'll
00:56:54 --> 00:56:57: be doing everything I can to to bring it back
00:56:57 --> 00:57:00: this year to try to get another crack in a
00:57:00 --> 00:57:01: vote to get this moving.
00:57:01 --> 00:57:04: I mean what it makes me think is if you
00:57:04 --> 00:57:08: think there were even pre sales people could be buying
00:57:08 --> 00:57:09: these homes now.
00:57:09 --> 00:57:12: Alright like that's what really makes me mad and we.
00:57:12 --> 00:57:15: We can't really afford to wait here,
00:57:15 --> 00:57:19: especially on, you know, there's 300,000 housing units in the
00:57:19 --> 00:57:22: city we were talking about 100 to experiment on,
00:57:22 --> 00:57:24: so you know, I think I have to do a
00:57:24 --> 00:57:26: better job of of of,
00:57:26 --> 00:57:29: you know, informing Council what this would really do.
00:57:29 --> 00:57:31: You know what the risks are,
00:57:31 --> 00:57:34: which are very low on a on 100 unit pilot
00:57:34 --> 00:57:36: project and the benefits are super high.
00:57:36 --> 00:57:40: You know the state of Oregon just did this across
00:57:40 --> 00:57:41: their entire state,
00:57:41 --> 00:57:42: you know? So I mean,
00:57:42 --> 00:57:44: it's. It's not like there's not it is.
00:57:44 --> 00:57:47: This is some kind of radical unproven idea.
00:57:47 --> 00:57:48: It's working in other places,
00:57:48 --> 00:57:50: and so I'll just, you know,
00:57:50 --> 00:57:52: have to get it back on the agenda as soon
00:57:52 --> 00:57:53: as I can.
00:57:53 --> 00:57:57: And I'm thinking probably have another kick out in July
00:57:57 --> 00:57:58: right around there.
00:57:58 --> 00:58:01: Another space to watch, so I think we have time
00:58:01 --> 00:58:05: for one more quick question before wrapping up and let's
00:58:05 --> 00:58:07: talk about the view cone policy.
00:58:07 --> 00:58:11: So is the city reviewing current view connan shadowing policy
00:58:11 --> 00:58:13: as part of the City wide Plan or any other
00:58:13 --> 00:58:15: planning processes.
00:58:15 --> 00:58:19: Historically, both of these factors have negatively impacted the supply
00:58:19 --> 00:58:22: of all forms of housing as well as office.
00:58:22 --> 00:58:25: An employment spaces. Yeah, I mean.
00:58:25 --> 00:58:26: On both of these policies,
00:58:26 --> 00:58:30: summary created a very very long time ago.
00:58:30 --> 00:58:33: Are just kind of rolling along,

00:58:33 --> 00:58:37: so this is part of what I think we need
00:58:37 --> 00:58:40: to review is is you know we we don't have
00:58:41 --> 00:58:42: any shadowing crisis.
00:58:42 --> 00:58:47: You know view cones are often from the eye of
00:58:47 --> 00:58:51: the beholder and so they could be re examined.
00:58:51 --> 00:58:55: But what we really have to put at the top
00:58:55 --> 00:58:58: of our priority list is is how do we get
00:58:58 --> 00:59:00: more rentals and.
00:59:00 --> 00:59:03: Affordable homes for purchase. Built like that.
00:59:03 --> 00:59:06: That is where we have to get to and I
00:59:06 --> 00:59:08: think that's what public input is for,
00:59:08 --> 00:59:12: but Council has to have more of these decisions in
00:59:12 --> 00:59:15: front of them and they can't just get held up
00:59:15 --> 00:59:18: in in the planning process because there may be a
00:59:18 --> 00:59:21: small variation from the current policy,
00:59:21 --> 00:59:24: so this is really my job is to dig in
00:59:24 --> 00:59:26: and a free this stuff up and to get the
00:59:27 --> 00:59:30: decisions in front of Council for them to make so
00:59:30 --> 00:59:33: it's not. Like automatically, yes.
00:59:33 --> 00:59:35: This stuff is going to get built,
00:59:35 --> 00:59:36: but let's get a decision.
00:59:36 --> 00:59:39: Let's not get it held up because we're a little
00:59:39 --> 00:59:43: nervous about perhaps slightly going outside a current policy,
00:59:43 --> 00:59:45: which is not law, it's just policy.
00:59:45 --> 00:59:47: It's guidelines by laws are different in policy,
00:59:47 --> 00:59:52: and I think that's important to recognize.
00:59:52 --> 00:59:53: I appreciate that so much.
00:59:53 --> 00:59:56: This has been a really informative hour and really happy
00:59:57 --> 00:59:58: to take part in this.
00:59:58 --> 01:00:01: Thank you so much. Mary Stewart for your time and
01:00:01 --> 01:00:03: being candid and open answering these questions.
01:00:03 --> 01:00:07: Thank you. Appreciate it. Great well and thank you Darcy
01:00:07 --> 01:00:09: for hosting the dialogue with the mayor.
01:00:09 --> 01:00:12: And again there thank you for joining us hopefully.
01:00:12 --> 01:00:14: Certainly by this time next year.
01:00:14 --> 01:00:16: I hope if not sooner will be able to do
01:00:16 --> 01:00:18: this but it will be in person again.
01:00:18 --> 01:00:21: Although I do think the zoom format does allow us
01:00:21 --> 01:00:23: to tap tackle a lot more.
01:00:23 --> 01:00:25: Questions which can be really helpful but just want to
01:00:25 --> 01:00:27: thank every thank the mayor.
01:00:27 --> 01:00:30: Again. Thank you, Darcy. I hope you both come back.

01:00:30 --> 01:00:31: Thank you all of you.
01:00:31 --> 01:00:33: The attendees who joined us this afternoon.
01:00:33 --> 01:00:36: We're going to continue hosting conversations around this topic and
01:00:37 --> 01:00:37: many more.
01:00:37 --> 01:00:40: Annualize looking forward to being a partner with the mayor's
01:00:40 --> 01:00:41: office.
01:00:41 --> 01:00:44: With the city Vancouver with really governments across the region
01:00:44 --> 01:00:47: trying to do our part to bring the best practices
01:00:47 --> 01:00:50: both locally and globally within the UI network to solve
01:00:50 --> 01:00:52: these problems, would like to post covid world so,
01:00:52 --> 01:00:55: and as always, I want to thank our sponsors once
01:00:55 --> 01:00:55: again.
01:00:55 --> 01:00:57: For their support, if you lie and we look forward
01:00:58 --> 01:00:59: to seeing you at our future events,
01:00:59 --> 01:01:01: we've got a lot of good ones coming up,
01:01:01 --> 01:01:03: so feel free to visit our website or follow us
01:01:03 --> 01:01:04: on social media.
01:01:04 --> 01:01:06: And again, thanks for joining us and have a great
01:01:06 --> 01:01:06: afternoon.

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