STATE OF THE CITY

Mayor highlights future development in Kelowna

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In his first state of the municipality address, Kelowna Mayor Colin Basran called the four-year term of the current city council, a “turning point” for the city in terms of development and a changing economy.

Addressing a large crowd gathered Wednesday for the annual Kelowna Chamber of Commerce State of the City lunch meeting at the Capri Hotel, Basran dwelled more on what is coming up than what the city has done to date.

He described the major changes coming to the city in the next four years, highlighting the amount of private and public investment, especially downtown.

“The city’s skyline will change with major new developments coming on the market downtown, in Rutland and South Pandosy,” said Basran. “But I expect the change over the next four years to be more profound than just the urban landscape.”

Citing statistics that show rising numbers of people working locally in the technology and professional sectors, the mayor said Kelowna is shifting to a knowledge-based economy. That shift is helped by the “four pillars” of the local economy—Okanagan College, UBC Okanagan, Kelowna General Hospital and Kelowna International Airport.

“A lot of our diversity also comes from these ‘four pillars’... These are growing institutional foundations that generate a lot of jobs and economic output,” he said.

Basran also described the numerous building projects planned for 2015, including the new $48-million police services building on Clement Avenue, a 24-storey hotel at the foot of Queensway, a new five-storey office building on Doyle Avenue at Richter to house 800 Interior Health employees, the Innovation Centre beside the downtown library, as well as a new parkade and the expansion of the existing library parkade, new owners for the stalled Lucaya and SOPA Square developments, redevelopment of the Perimeter Road, completion of John Hindle Drive, the Queensway Transit Station and development of Central Green.

The city plans to spend $91 million on capital projects this year. In addition, some carryovers from last year will be finished in 2015, such as the Clifton Road upgrade and finishings on Lakeshore Road.

Through his reoccurring theme of “building community,” the mayor described the city’s ongoing investments in hundreds of services, programs and initiatives, saying these are fundamental to any community’s character.

“Sometimes the hundreds of services the city provides every day are overshadowed by our interest in the new facilities and projects we have on the go...but it’s important to note these services because our sense of community doesn’t come from new buildings or new roads, it comes from the number and quality of services we provide.”

Colin Basran, Kelowna mayor

Ple斯坦vale seniors and affordable housing project, Lakeshore Road improvements around Anne McClymont Elementary, the South