

The Empire Club Presents



**COUNCILLOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR
MICHAEL THOMPSON
IN CONVERSATION WITH**

**JAN DE SILVA: VISION 2020 – BUILDING THE
CITY OF TORONTO’S PROSPERITY AND
COMPETITIVENESS**

Welcome Address, by Mr. Kent Emerson, Associate Vice
President at the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation
and President of the Empire Club of Canada

May 16, 2019

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. From the Arcadian Court in downtown Toronto, welcome, to the Empire Club of Canada. For those of you just joining us through either our webcast or podcast, welcome, to the meeting.

Today we present Councillor and Deputy Mayor Michael Thompson in conversation with Jan De Silva of the Toronto Region Board of Trade.

An ambitious clapper at the Head Table got everyone going this morning. Today's topic is "Vision 2020: Building the City of Toronto's Prosperity and Competitiveness."

HEAD TABLE

Distinguished Guest Speakers:

Ms. Jan De Silva, President and Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Region Board of Trade

Mr. Michael Thompson, Councillor for Ward 21 (Scarborough Centre) and Deputy Mayor, City of Toronto

Guests:

Mr. Izzie Abrams, Vice President, Government and External Affairs, Waste Connections of Canada

Mr. Dino Chiesa, Chair, CreateTO

Ms. Jenna Hay, Head, Policy Development and Regulatory Affairs, Lending Loop; Director, Empire Club of Canada

Ms. Claire Hopkinson, Director and Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Arts Foundation

Mr. Andrea Merluzzi, National Manager, Business Development, Air Canada

Mr. Allan Scully, Executive Vice President, Development, SmartCentres

Ms. Leigh Smout, Executive Director, World Trade Centre Toronto, Toronto Region Board of Trade

Ms. Antoinette Tummillo, President, Antoinette Tummillo and Associates; Second Vice President, Empire Club of Canada

When we talk about a vision for the city's prosperity, it is essential that we have today's speakers as part of the conversation. That is because of the transformative work that they have done to build new prosperity across the city. When it comes to Toronto, there is so much that goes into economic development, much more than the standard things that we think of like attracting FDI, transit, housing, and quality of life. They all play a significant role.

Doing so while working to make Toronto a global tech hub is even more challenging. Speaking of which, we are at the cusp of Collision, North America's fast-growing tech conference, which is being hosted here in Toronto in just a few days. Councillor, I know you had a thing to do about bringing this to Toronto, and I want to thank you for that.

As we look at how all these different aspects of economic development intersect, perhaps one of the most interesting examples is the King Street Pilot. Following the launch of the project, the city created the "Food is King" promotional campaign to support restaurants along King Street.

It featured a \$15 Ritual credit to be used at 40 different restaurants along King, which was a big partnership between the City, the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas and Ritual, a great example of the City working together in a creative way with the more established organizations and new players alike.

That kind of creativity is especially important in what any observer would describe as an uncertain time for the city.

It is no secret that there are new budget challenges that have surfaced because of the recent provincial announcements around funding to the City of Toronto, and these challenges are of significant magnitude. It is also no secret that Councillor Thompson's creativity and nearly a decade of experience as Chair of the Economic Development Committee will assist the city in coming up with solutions necessary. When there is no door, Councillor Thompson is known to open a window. It is just like *The Sound of Music*.

In this time of constant change, a time in need of new solutions, we are all here, one, to understand his vision for the city; two, to listen to the role that the private sector plays in the city's future prosperity; and, three, to recognize the work he has done for Toronto in the past.

Councillor Thompson is Chair of Toronto's Economic and Community Development Committee and a member of the Executive Committee, not to mention Deputy Mayor.

Now in his fifth term as councillor, Michael has earned a reputation as one of Toronto's hardest working and most effective political leaders.

He created the first-ever TTC transit strategy for Scarborough, a strategy designed to significantly expand and enhance public transit services for all Scarborough residents.

Throughout his years on council, Michael's unrelenting drive for public safety in the face of increased gun violence ultimately led to the development of a city-wide Community Safety Plan.

Michael's commitment to developing Toronto's city-wide economy is well known. He maintains a widespread network of business relationships that have helped the city to enhance business retention, promote growth and increase private sector employment.

His active engagement in business has helped speed the launch of new ventures, resolve business and residential conflicts and gain business participation in a wide range of community-building initiatives.

He has also attracted billions of dollars in new investments to the city, contributing to a more robust economy and substantial job creation. Michael is a firm believer in the critical value of culture and builder of strong communities.

When he first took office, he co-founded the Taste of Lawrence Festival, which brings together tens of thousands of people each year. In 2013, he led the City's effort to create a new arts and culture plan that provided a bold, new roadmap for cultural vitality and strengthened arts spending. Michael was also the first Chair of the Toronto Music Advisory Committee and played a key role in efforts to attract international film and television productions and studio investments to Toronto.

Ladies and gentlemen, please, welcome the Deputy Mayor and Councillor Thompson.

Mr. Michael Thompson

Good afternoon, everyone. Are we in Toronto, or are we in Detroit, or Buffalo maybe? Good afternoon, everyone.

Thank you. Thank you very much for joining Jan and me this afternoon, and thank you, Kent. I want to thank our host, the Empire Club and Kent Emerson, the President, for having me here today. We have actually had an opportunity to be here for other events. This organization has such a storied history, and I am delighted to participate and take part in this event today.

I would like to thank, also, our sponsors who have been acknowledged already because, without the sponsors, in fact, this event would not be successful. May I ask you to give our sponsors a big round of applause, please.

Finally, I would like to thank Mike Williams. He is the tall fellow that is walking around here somewhere. Well, he is sitting right now, I am sure. He is the General Manager for the EDC (Economic Development and Culture).

I would also like to thank all the members of our Economic Development and Culture team for their dedication and great work over the years. As Kent has mentioned, this is my tenth year chairing the economic development file for the City of Toronto.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured, actually, to have this opportunity to discuss some of the work that we have done at EDC, as well as our vision for an even more prosperous and competitive City of Toronto in the coming years.

There is so much that we have to look forward to, so much work that we have to do and, of course, we cannot do it without you. Before I dive in and Jan and I start to talk, I would like to take a moment to, in fact, share with you our vision for the 2020s. Before we get into that piece of our conversation and so on, I would just like to take a moment to provide you with a summary of some of our most notable recent accomplishments because I think that helps to set the table with respect to the conversation that will take place shortly. From 2015–2018, we oversaw investment and an overseas trade mission in order to bring back approximately \$1.5 billion in foreign direct investment for the City of Toronto. We established 27 international relationships to assist Toronto businesses seeking to enter global markets.

We engaged with over 1,500 companies through the international trade training program in partnership with the World Trade Centre, and Leigh Smout is here, who runs that organization on behalf of the Board of Trade.

Thank you Leigh, for what you have done. Big round of applause for Leigh.

In 2017, Toronto became the first Canadian city to be designated as a UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts.

The award recognizes our leadership in film, music, digital media and other forms of cultural expression using technology. We rank amongst the top cities in the world because we recognize the important contribution culture makes to our prosperity. Claire Hopkinson is here, and I saw Sara Diamond as well, two of our leaders in this field.

Thank you very much for being here. Ladies and gentlemen, culture is, in fact, vital in creating and attracting opportunities for our city. In fact, a livable city without culture is no city at all. In fact, the opportunity of culture in our city creates an environment in our city where people want to live, work and play. While the feeling of uncertainty is rising around the world—in many places there is such great uncertainty—Toronto is seen, globally, as a reliable and a strong economic partner. In fact, it is viewed as one of the safest places to invest. We are very happy and delighted with that.

As Toronto business leaders, you probably share my view that Toronto is, in fact, the best place in the world. Now, through our collective work, the entire world is recognizing that Toronto is not only a cool place, but it is a great place to invest. Our secret is no longer a secret. We think that there is great opportunity for investments to come to our city. We have, in fact, accomplished a lot, but we know there is still work to do. We must capitalize on our momentum by continually pushing forward to build a prosperous city for all of our residents.

In a city where diversity is our strength, we cannot continue to accept the status quo. For too long, too many of our residents have been overlooked and under-represented in decision-making levels. Diversity does not automatically translate into equal opportunity. A truly prosperous city is reflective of the race, ethnicity and experience of all of its residents.

Thank you very much for being here and enjoying lunch with us. I look forward to discussing the city's progress and goals with Jan and answering your questions. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

KE: Jan De Silva is an experienced international business executive with a track record of excelling in on-the-ground leadership roles.

As President and CEO of the Toronto Region Board of Trade, she is spearheading efforts to make Toronto one of the most competitive and sought-after business regions in the world. Jan, thank you very much for joining us, today. This is going to be a fantastic discussion. We are all looking forward to it. Ladies and gentlemen, please, give a round applause for the President of the Board of Trade, Jan De Silva.

Deputy Mayor and Councillor Thompson in Conversation with Jan De Silva

JDS: Thanks, Kent. Thanks to the Empire Club. Delighted to have this chance to have a conversation with the amazing Deputy Mayor Michael Thompson.

As the Deputy Mayor has indicated, we do a lot of work together because economic development really—the magic is when we get strong leaders on the

political side, great staff at the city, and a business organization that is bringing some funding momentum to the table as well. Delighted to have this conversation.

Kent, you said the title of this event is “Vision 2020: Building the City of Toronto’s Prosperity and Competitiveness.” Actually, knowing this man, the title of this discussion is “Getting Things Done.” That is what it is all about with the Deputy Mayor. Kent, you talked about something really exciting that is starting on Monday. It is not summer. It is not nice weather. It is this massive tech event called Collision. The Deputy Mayor has been an active instigator in helping to bring this major event to the city. In fact at our gala annual dinner in February, Paddy Cosgrave, the founder and CEO of this event was talking about why Toronto is the city for this event. This is an event of unparalleled scale for the city. Deputy Mayor, what do you want the visitors to our city to take away from the amazing event that is happening next week?

MT: First of all, I am really delighted that Collision is finally here. I was on the stage last year with just getting—I was actually going on and Al Gore was coming off the stage. He said to me, “Are you trying to take this from New Orleans?” I said, “Actually, we’ve got this. It will be in Toronto next year, but Al, you’re invited to come.”

JDS: And he is coming.

MT: Exactly.

JDS: Good job.

MT: We have what I believe are some of the most brilliant people in the entire world in this city. They are innovative; they are focused on creativity; and their technology is essential thematically to what they are doing. Most people do not realize, for example, that everyone has a cell phone; your touchscreen was developed here in the city of Toronto, not elsewhere. Most people think it is elsewhere. What we want to do with respect to this tech conference is to actually utilize this as a showcase, a feature, to show creativity, to show Toronto at its finest, to be able to demonstrate to the influencers who are coming that this is a place to invest, that this is a great city for everyone who comes. We welcome 30,000–50,000 new people into the city every year. They come in with a tremendous amount of talent. We create a space for them to be able to then, obviously, utilize the talent to actually help others and such. We want to demonstrate that this city is a great place for innovation in technology for investment.

We want to be able to drill that down into then creating sustainable opportunities for jobs, so that the residents in Toronto will have opportunities to be able to prosper and to develop their own goals and objectives,

whether or not it is good schools for their kids—and we have many great schools. We want to expose our city to the world, because we are, in fact, not competing against Mississauga or Markham or York Region. We are competing against the world. When the world comes and sees the technological innovation, whether or not it is a DMC and our institutions, the level of education that exists in our city, they will take notice and they will want to come and invest. I think it is an important opportunity using Collision as a vehicle.

We will also generate, over three years, about \$147 million. It is an investment that we have made into this particular initiative. We are all going to be the better for it, and the exposure to us is going to be enormous.

One final point and this is that we have spoken with Global Affairs. They have indicated this is the largest number of delegations that they are welcoming for a single event. We have 77 delegations from all over the world, some of them from our sister cities, that we have cultivated over the years, creating opportunities, creating connections, so that we can actually see investment that is real, whether it is arts and culture, because we use technology to drive many things, and we use culture to drive all of the things that are business-related in our city.

JDS: Let me just put the economic impact in context.

The Collision is the little sister of the world's largest tech event called Web Summit. That has been running in Lisbon for about eight years.

A couple of months ago, the government of Portugal announced that they had just signed a ten-year exclusive with the same organizers of Collision to keep Web Summit in Lisbon. What they did is they offered €100 million. That was Lisbon and Portugal's commitment to expand the convention facilities and hotel capacity, so that Web Summit can grow. It is over 75,000 delegates that come now. In exchange, Web Summit signed a \$3 billion break fee. If they leave any time within those ten years, they have to repay the Portuguese government €3 billion. That is the economic impact that Portugal has tracked from eight years of having Web Summit. There is a ton of economic impact that is going to happen to the city with a major event like that.

MT: That is absolutely correct.

JDS: Thanks for your role in that. You were also there last year in November.

MT: You were there.

JDS: I know. We had a big Canadian delegation in Lisbon, encouraging people to come to Toronto. Thank you Air Canada for the flights. That is great.

The Deputy Mayor and I have spent a lot of time in some of the major cities around the world. I do not know if we have got media in the room. Sometimes our hometown media loves to reflect on how many flights people are on. Well, let me tell you, there is huge economic value of repeat and multiple visits to these major markets, to both learn and to cultivate opportunities for the cities. Can you share a little bit about some of the work that has been done and where you are starting to see some payback, maybe in the film sector because I know you are just back from L.A.?

MT: Right, thank you. We were just in L.A.—“we” being the mayor, myself and Councillor Fletcher. What we recognize is that—and I led the first mission prior to the mayor being elected under the former mayor, Rob Ford, and I was the only person that was allowed to travel under that regime, and the objective was that we need to promote Toronto. We need to look at how we can expand our reach, globally. And the film sector—it is important for us to actually work with the industry. I guess some ten years ago or so, the industry was around 17,000 people working in that industry. Now, there are about 30,000 people working in that industry.

Our trip, our annual trip to Los Angeles is there to talk with the decision-makers who are deciding where films are actually made, deciding where to make those particular investments. We also listened to them to

hear from them what their concerns are, and to understand what we need to do to attract more investment in the film sector. I am very pleased to say that this time around, we did hear some interesting things from them.

We had some really good meetings. Those meetings, actually, are going to lead, in my view, to probably another 7,000 or 8,000 new jobs. We are talking about a potentially \$5-billion investment in central Toronto, north central Toronto. We are talking about another probably about a \$300–400 million investment in Scarborough, of all places. Sixteen years ago, when I spoke to some of the business owners there about the fact that we should be looking at the film and television sector, building studios in the area, they all thought I was a little bit off.

Today, when they are signing their 20-year leases now with some of the companies that are going to be locating there, the jobs are coming. All of these things are taking place based on our objective to work in collaboration with the film and television sector to ensure that when the films come into our city, we welcome them, because we know it is not always comfortable for some residents, because they complain about the filming and so on taking place. We remind them as to what the benefits are.

The opportunity for our city is enormous, because we have to compete against Los Angeles, Vancouver—Atlanta, perhaps a little less now, based on some of the

policies that they have come out with lately. I think that we can take advantage of those things. It also provides us, as a community, with a focus in terms of how those investments will benefit all of us.

A new area that we have started to work on, because it is really important that we have talent is we are starting to work with some companies in identifying the need to ensure that we have the onramp opportunity for young people and people in this industry to have opportunity to be trained. There is a collaboration with respect to the colleges and other institutions, so that we can build on it because it is really important that while we focus on industry development and so on, we also focus on people development, because they go hand in hand together because it is about sustainable growth, job opportunities, and, at the end of the day, it really is about prosperity and how people benefit from the time and the investment that we spend on their behalf through these types of engagements in terms of the travel.

JDS: Where we are trying to partner with the city, as well, is trying to help with that talent definition, where the talent gaps are, so that we can be working with post-secondary. An example related to film is Jonathan Ahee, who I think is moving on to a new role. He was head of our local film sector union. He was telling me we have had to turn away a couple of period films, major productions here, because we did not have enough period wig

stylers. There are jobs across all components of the film sector that we never even think about, but those are really amazing jobs that can be unlocked, so it is a huge benefit.

MT: Can I just add something? One of the things that we discussed when the mayor and I were in Los Angeles just last week is they told us that an area that we, in Toronto, should be focusing on is film writing.

We were a little bit surprised. They said the writers determine where the films are actually produced because they cast either—just the way they sort of write their script to show specific cities and the sort of milieu as to what they want. When those writers create those scripts they usually go to those places where they identify. We are now going to develop a relationship between Los Angeles and Toronto, and we are going to drill down in terms of creating opportunities for young men and women who want to be in this particular industry because that is really important whether or not you are talking about technology or you are talking about the film sector or any of the other sectors that we actually have in our city. We want to make sure that there are opportunities for people to be engaged and to fill the void because of that skills gap. If you allow a situation where you are not replenishing it, then you are going to fall behind. Because we are not competing with Mississauga and our region, we are compet-

ing globally; we are also competing with South Africa and other places like that where film is made.

We have got to make sure that all of the elements are connected and it is viable, so that when we look at a greater vision for the city and the growth of our industries and the sectors, we have all of the different elements weaved into the opportunity for greater success for all of us.

JDS: These kinds of insights and partnerships do not happen with a single trip. If there is one message I can give—and it is certainly something we have been talking about at the city—it is about the repeat visits and strengthening those partnerships and getting more of those insights and encouraging people to come back.

It is really critical that we keep you on an airplane as much as we can.

MT: As much as I can. In fact, I have to say this, and, Air Canada, of course, I have to say this: Traveling is not as sexy as most people think it is. It is difficult, quite frankly. Here is the thing. In my capacity, I have an obligation to work for all the citizens in this city to be able to sell Toronto as a place where the talent exists, where diversity exists, where all of the things that you need to be successful are.

And the most important ingredient with respect to that is the very people who are the backbone of our

community and our city, because, without the people, all the other things are not as important, quite frankly.

JDS: The size of city council has reduced, so workload has changed a little bit. Your responsibilities have expanded substantially to include many aspects of community development. On the surface, fire, ambulance, municipal housing, youth, senior services, recreation are now reporting to your committee. How does that align with your focus on economic growth?

MT: That is a really, really good question. We asked ourselves that question, as well, when I sort of was told that this is the portfolio that you are going to be responsible for. Let us leave aside the economic development component part for a moment and touch on what community development is, what community development is all about. First of all, it is about people.

It is about neighbourhood. It is about your community. It is all the things that you need. If we are going to ensure that there is access to the economic development piece, which is jobs, creativity and so on, we have to ensure the services are in place. We have to ensure we have healthy communities. We have to ensure, for example, that there is appropriate daycare for mothers and fathers who need that for their children.

We have to ensure that we have a healthy community, healthy neighbourhood. We have to make sure, for example, that in your neighbourhood, you have

got green space; you have got parks; you have got the trails; you have got all of the things that you need to wake up to on a daily basis to ensure that you have the infrastructure, the foundational things to allow you then to focus on creativity, focus on the job that you are responsible for, focus on the opportunity to ensure that wealth can be created. The other point is that if we do not provide all of these types of services through our focus on economic development and community development, what we find is that if we do not offer services, for example, day care, a person will make sacrifices with respect to his or her work. A mom, for example, who is a talented person, who wants to go to work, will have to make a choice whether or not she wants go to work or take care of her children.

The thing is, we do not want them to have to make that choice. We want to provide them with affordable daycare and facilities, so that their children can be well taken care of, and then they can take their talent as part of that workforce, so we do not want to see a skills gap that would exist otherwise. I believe that the co-twinning of those relationships between economic and community development is extremely important because we are also focusing on some of the social service issues as well, which is TESS, for example.

Toronto Employment and Social Services comes as part of economic and community development. We are

able to have first-hand understanding as to what the challenges are for the people in the community and then to build, if you will, a policy and/or program that connects them into the job opportunities and the training. At the end of the day, as I said, the most important ingredient in terms of what we are trying to address is a fundamental issue in terms of how we make people's lives better, how we create the opportunities to respond to the things that they need in order then for them to either go to work or be in the community—how do you create this healthy ecosystem or this relationship so that all that is needed is there when it is needed?

JDS: Exactly. It is something we are also partnering very closely with you on because all of our members talk about talent gaps. There just should not be talent gaps in this marketplace. It is about how we define where the jobs are and how we help people stream into post-secondary opportunities. I know LiUNA is one of the sponsors here today. I saw Mike Yorke is here from Carpenters. You folks are very actively at the table with us just looking at the construction sector to say how many jobs we need to fill just to get things built in the city, and 146,000 jobs are what we have calculated to be required over the next decade in the city just to get the infrastructure projects we know has been funded by the federal government, let alone what the province has just announced. There is a tremen-

dous wealth of opportunity. It is about how we create that opportunity. I know that as we were prepping for this you talked a lot about the fact that diversity is our strength but diversity does not mean that everyone is getting the same opportunity. Did you want to speak on that?

MT: Yes, I do. I sort of touched on it in my remarks.

We have, if you look in this room, amazing men and women of all different backgrounds or ethnicities and so on. In Toronto and in Canada, we want to celebrate that. Celebrating in and of itself is not the end goal. We also want to make sure that people feel and actually are able to experience the ability to make decisions that involve them, that they are part of the input that creates opportunity and so on. When we create this sense of prosperity, it cannot be for some people and not for other people. It has to be for all of us.

One of the really interesting things about our city—and I guess elsewhere in Canada because we are unique in this way, and we care fundamentally about people first—is that we have settlement opportunities for newcomers and so on. We have asylum seekers. We have all types of people who are coming.

The federal government just gave us, recently, \$45 million to help with respect to settlement. They gave us \$26 million more and, of course, it is not enough, of course. There is a lot of work to be done. I say

this because it is really important. When I look at a place like Shanghai, for example, there are 24 million people living there, between 700,000–800,000 new people coming in every year. They are not coming from abroad. They are coming from basically the rural area into the major cities. In Toronto, we have about 35,000–60,000 people, depending on whose numbers you use, coming into our city. The difference for us is we offer a lot of settlement opportunity.

We offer an opportunity where people can get connected. We also have opportunities where people can train and re-train and so on. Of course, it is not enough, but we are actually focusing a lot of attention on that.

We get a diverse workforce. We get different people coming in and talent. If we do not have an opportunity where people can feel genuinely that their skills are recognized and are actually wanted to actually make our society better, then we lose that skill component. It becomes a deficit for us. As we make decisions, we should make it based on abilities, not on what someone looks like or their ethnic background and so on. I do not think anybody in this room is guilty of that, but there are some who are guilty of that. What we are saying is that we want to remind you that talent is extremely important. What we want to do is we want to build on that, and we want to be enriched as a result of the talented men and women who will come from all

over the world. I will give you just one final example.

I met a young woman a couple of weeks ago. I was at an event in my ward. I thought that she was someone who had been involved in a variety of things for a long period of time, by just the way she was talking and the way she conducted herself. I went over and introduced myself. She told me she had only been in Canada for less than a year. She was involved.

She had a job. What was important that she told me was that she felt that the people who helped her to get settled in to learning a little bit about Canadiana activities and approach to things here really had her best interest at heart. What was she doing? She was talking about Toronto. She was doing things to help us, making a contribution. When we open our minds to the recognition that all people can do great things, we actually become better off, and we eventually become more prosperous, because all of these wonderful people are going to be doing great things that actually help us all. At the end of the day, we are and should be one big family, even if we are welcoming a new addition to the family on a daily basis.

JDS:I can keep going on with questions, or we have got some time for audience questions? Does anyone in the audience have anything they wanted to ask the Deputy Mayor? Show of hands. I can keep going.

MT: Keep talking.

JDS: I am happy to. I apologize that this is going to sound a little self-serving, but bear with me. This gentleman and I—we have been traveling all over the world together. We have been working really, really closely with economic development from activities like our World Trade Centre and the Trade Accelerator Program that has helped hundreds of companies activate an export plan to our Market Activation Program that is actually curating business delegations from particular sectors to go to particular growth markets.

I think there has been so much we have accomplished because you have held us to task around data tracking everything. From your perspective and not just with an organization like ours or the Empire Club, why is it important that there is collaboration between your committee, the economic development group at the city and the business community?

MT: I think collaboration is everything in terms of our focus and our attention.

Let me just take you back a second. When I first became the Chair of EDC, which was in 2010, one of the first things we did was that we reached out to the business community, asked them this question: Do you know about the city's Economic Development Committee? Michael Williams, I think, had just joined us

at that particular point or maybe a year earlier.

Many did not either know what we did, or some did not actually care. What I did was I reached out to a gentleman by the name of Blake Goldring.

He is a Chairman and CEO of AGF Management and others. I said we would like to sit and talk with him about how we can work together and how we can reach out to a broader group of business leaders in this city to first of all ask whether or not we were relevant to them; secondly, if we were not, what we needed to do; and thirdly, whether or not we can sit together and bring together a collaborative approach, put a plan together. They agreed. We, Bill Dobson, and others, your predecessor, were there—Carol Wilding and so on. We sat together with our staff, team, and over many months we came up with a blueprint. It was called a “Prosperity Agenda for the City of Toronto.” Subsequent to that, we put together a plan for collaboration.

When we bring the expertise from the private sector, NGOs, academia, unions and other organizations, we get the best input from everyone to be able to address some of the fundamental challenges that are facing our city. We never take an approach or look at a situation without having some goals and objectives, recognizing that there is a problem to solve.

You cannot solve problems by yourself if it is a big city-wide issue. The City of Toronto, itself—well, we are the City of Toronto—cannot solve all of our problems, so it is important to collaborate. We get the best and the brightest. We get the input from everyone.

The interesting thing is, what we get, which I believe is extremely important, is that opportunity where people believe in what we are doing, and they want to work with you. They want to actually be part of the solution as opposed to be part of the problem.

When you get that energy from people, it is amazing the reach that we can achieve.

May I give you an example? We had identified the aerospace cluster as an area that we believe that Toronto needed to play a greater role in. We have got this great space at Downsview. We got together with Centennial College—Centennial had the aerospace campus in my ward, a very small one—and UTIAS and others and so on, and we talked about a game plan.

We put together a committee at the city, which I co-chaired with another councillor who is no longer a councillor, Maria Augimeri, because it was in her area, the Downsview air base. We worked with the Department of National Defense. We worked with Canada Lands and a variety of others to identify what it is we were trying to do, which was we wanted to be part of

this community. Centennial College also wanted to open a campus on that Downsview Lands. And all the monies were not in place, so we all worked together, put our heads together, approached the government, Stephen Harper at the time, about funding for this particular campus and to get started. Probably about three weeks ago, we opened the new Downsview Park Aerospace Campus on that location.

What is really interesting is that the young, talented men and women who are in that program and the leadership that this collaboration brought together give us proof in the example that, in fact, if we put our heads together, there are so many great things that we can do for this city. This city generates 25% of this country's GDP. This is the engine that makes Canada work.

If this engine does not work because we are not creative, the country does not work. That is my view because I have another view of the city, which is that this is, in fact, a city-state, and we have to act accordingly when we compete globally.

JDS: As you can see, I rightly re-titled this event today as "Vision 2020: Getting Things Done," with this gentleman here. While the Board of Trade is very focused on trying to make Toronto one of the most competitive and sought-after business regions in the world, and the Deputy Mayor agrees, he wants to take it a step further and make it one of the most competitive

and sought-after regions, making it an environment that has an opportunity for everyone. Deputy Mayor, thank you so much for sharing your thoughts and your experiences, today.

A round of applause for Deputy Mayor, Michael Thompson. Back to Kent.

KE: I would like to call on Andrea Merluzzi from Air Canada to give the thank you today. Thank you for sponsoring, Andrea.

**Note of Appreciation, by Mr. Andrea Merluzzi,
National Manager, Business Development, Air Canada**

Good afternoon. I was going to say something about Air Canada, but I think that Jan and Councillor Thompson have already covered that for me. Thank you for doing that.

Dear friends, today's conversation between two champions and amazing advocates of our city left me personally with the absolute certainty that the future of Toronto is bright. It is shaped through the capable hands of people like our very own Deputy Mayor and City Councillor, Michael Thompson, and the Toronto Region Board of Trade President and CEO, Jan De Silva.

Thanks to your vision and hard work, you continue to

show what effective, relentless leaders of our community do to keep inspiring others by showcasing a proven record of achievements that we can all benefit from. On behalf of Air Canada, I sincerely thank you for motivating this community and for paving a new path for generations to come.

Getting things done is what we need to hear and more so what we need to see. We are witnesses, and at the same time, key players of a new era founded on collaboration, just like we heard, competitiveness and aspirations, making Toronto the epicenter of a new cultural, social and economic reality. All this also because of you. Councillor, Jan, thank you.

Concluding Remarks, by Kent Emerson

Thank you so much. One of the greatest compliments to Councillor Thompson would be that ten years ago, there was a different mayor in Toronto, so he has been appointed by a different mayor and survived through three administrations. In this city, that is a big deal. Congratulations on your speech today and all kinds of things in your life. Thank you very much. At the Empire Club, we have a bunch of events coming up. We will have the Honourable Navdeep Bains on Tuesday. That is going to be a fantastic event. We have an evening event following that on May 22nd, “Canada’s Fresh Political Voices” to talk about a lot of political things.

We have the National Chief, Perry Bellegarde, on Wednesday. Today, we launched our 36th and 37th events.

We have launched an event “CBC’s Power in Politics,” featuring Vassy Kapelos sort of doing an in-person version of Power in Politics, here, on the Empire Club stage.

We also have launched a “Women Who Build” event on June 13th, in the evening. LiUNA is sponsoring that.

Thank you very much for sponsoring that. It is talking about some of the women in the sector and their challenges and successes. There will be a great networking event in the evening. I just want to bring everyone’s attention to one final event. I am going to be leading an event about white supremacy and anti-hate on June 13th. I challenge many of you to support this event. Come to it.

Sponsor it. Councillor Thompson is sitting at the Head Table. There is a lot of stuff that is happening in Toronto that we do not like to talk about in terms of some events that have happened to our city in North York and other places.

We do need to talk about that a little bit more. Any corporate community members that want to be involved in this event, please, approach me. I would appreciate it. I think these events are harder to do, and that is why sometimes we do not do them, but I am going to do it. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

Meeting adjourned.