

On June 20th, 2014, Mayor Katz attended Summer Solstice: Concert in the Park! in Winnipeg and delivered the following remarks:

Good afternoon everyone!

Thank you for coming to Central Park today. We're going to celebrate some of the greatest performers in the country, right here in the heart of our downtown, for the Summer Solstice: Concert in the Park!

When I was first elected Mayor in 2004, Central Park was anything but a venue for a concert; it was a hub for crime and illegal activity.

There was no splash park behind you, or children playing here – only a dream in the community to turn this park around.

It's been 10 years, almost to the day, since I became Mayor on June 22nd, 2004.

I ran because, as a volunteer coach and as a father, I saw, first hand, how desperately Winnipeg needed someone to lead the change to turn our parks, and investments across the entire city, around.

And you granted me that privilege, to serve as your Mayor; and my focus has always remained the same: to collaborate and find balance to reinvest in your priorities.

I have dedicated the last 3,653 days to working directly with you: citizens and Council members, the Aboriginal community, arts and cultural organizations, business owners, investors, youth groups, not-for-profit organizations, and other levels of government.

Together, we have made our streets safer, built communities and opportunities for our young people, along with an investment-friendly climate for local and international businesses.

2004 was the worst year on record for auto theft. We were the worst in North America. 9000 autos were stolen that year. But by 2010, together, we reduced auto theft a whopping 47 per cent.

First responders' facilities had no investment in over forty years – our four new strategically located fire halls, new district police stations and downtown headquarters were desperately needed to reduce response times and greatly improve public safety throughout our city.

Today, I am proud to say, that, along with over \$80 million reinvested into youth and recreation opportunities, we now have 13 splash parks across the City, with another two in progress.

We have three indoor soccer complexes, city-wide skate parks, our pools have been overhauled and modernized, we have provided free sport programming - all thanks to your input and your ideas.

We have an unprecedented amount of construction going on right now due to investments into our infrastructure like never before.

Our budget for roads this year is a 173 per cent increase from 2012, but 2012 is a 450 per cent increase from 2003.

We worked together to bring a national museum out of Ottawa to Winnipeg – the Canadian Museum for Human Rights; we extended Chief Peguis Trail, completed phase one of the Southwest Rapid Transit Corridor and the new Disraeli bridges that include a separate active transportation bridge.

Active transportation wasn't even a concept applied in Winnipeg before 2004, and now, we have more than 100 kilometers of sharrows, bike lanes, pathways and trails.

We fought to keep property taxes among the lowest in the country so Winnipeg would remain affordable.

We revitalized downtown and developed new incentives for housing and commercial development so more people now live work and play in the heart of the City.

We fought to reduce business tax for small business and attract international investors and rebuilt the business environment that helped to bring the NHL back to Winnipeg.

No question, though. This has been a tough decade.

Being Mayor is full of challenges. People have often asked me: “Sam, why do you do this?”

And what I tell them can be captured today, right here, in Central Park.

What we have accomplished, together, as a community, to make this park a place where we can celebrate our incredible and world-renowned performing arts community... this feeling is what I try to express to people who ask me why I decided to become Mayor...this moment, right here, today, is my reward.

We turned Central Park...and Parks all across the City...completely around. We righted the ship, and city-wide, we are moving in the *right* direction. Great things are happening here and we did this together.

I said I would continue to work to make Winnipeg a better city as long as there is more work to be done.

And make no mistake, repairing decades worth of neglect from pipes to parks will take much more hard work.

I’ve also said that I would only seek two full terms as mayor.
And that is why I have decided that I will not be seeking re-election for Mayor.

It is a difficult decision, and one that required a lot of soul-searching, knowing there is still so much more work to be done.

It is my hope that the next Mayor and Council will continue to move Winnipeg forward in the right direction and continue investing in opportunities for our children and families, to continue ensuring Winnipeg remains attractive and welcoming to investors.

And, most importantly, I hope that they continue to invest in our greatest asset – our citizens...all of you.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for this privilege this past decade.

And of course, from the bottom of my heart I have to thank the individuals who made the real sacrifice when I chose to run for public office: my beautiful and supportive family: my wife Leah and my three children, Ava, Kiera and Aidan. Thank you to the most supportive family imaginable.

To my staff: your unwavering support over the last ten years has been appreciated in a way I simply cannot put into words. I know how truly honoured I am to have had you as members of my work family. I want you all to know how much your commitment, sacrifice and dedication has meant to me – thank you.

Continue to believe in Winnipeg. Continue to voice your dreams for your City.

Continue celebrating all that is great here, because there is so very much.