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NORTH VANCOUVER'S MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

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Building a stronger community

Right now it's just a massive hole in the ground in Lower Lonsdale at Esplanade and Rogers. But by summer of 2019 it will be the new North Vancouver Museum... a remarkable community hub that, its development team says, will redefine our concept of "museum".

In 2016 I was pleased to work with museum staff to secure a federal government investment of \$3 million into the cost of construction in partnership with the City of North Vancouver which is contributing \$2.55 million. As investments go, this is an important one because it is all about building a stronger community.

To belong to a community means knowing its history, understanding its present opportunities and challenges, and contributing to its promise for the future. That's how we truly plant roots and connect with a place.

A modern museum is where a community discovers itself – how the community evolved over time, the challenges and the lessons learned. It's a place where a community can cultivate productive dialogue that inspires and connects us. That is the ambitious vision of the new North Vancouver Museum and I very much applaud all of the community-builders involved in this project.

Long search for a new home

Since 1976, the history of North Vancouver has been housed in the aging Presentation House facility at 3rd and Chesterfield. The search for a suitable new museum location has been on-going now for at least forty years.

Presentation House was built in 1902 as the old Central School and later served as North Vancouver's City Hall. It has long been in sub-standard condition. In fact, fully eighty-seven years ago, in 1930, an architectural firm examined the building (then City Hall) and concluded:

"... We were not prepared to find ... such a rickety condition of affairs, the building has apparently at various times been jacked up, patched up and repaired, until there is not a straight or plumb line in it, with the natural consequence that the doors and windows don't fit and it is neither rain proof or wind proof; and generally speaking, we would strongly advise you not to spend more money on alterations than is absolutely necessary."

The museum's new home will be a 16,000 square foot purpose-designed space at the base of a new residential/retail development – Promenade at the Quay.

The North Vancouver Museum and Archives Commission, a shared partner agency of the District and City of North Vancouver has embarked on a public consultation to inform the interior and exhibit design. The Friends of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives Society will soon embark on a \$2 million community fund-raising campaign to equip the facility with state-of-the-art technology, exhibits and programming.

Exciting transformation

There is also a broader story here with regard to the transformation of the Shipyards and Lower Lonsdale areas into one of the most exciting and vibrant destinations in the province.

Across the street from the new museum will be the soon-to-open Polygon Gallery – the new home for Presentation House Gallery, an internationally acclaimed venue for artistic photography. Here again, the federal government made a significant contribution among a diverse range of funders. The three levels of government each contributed \$2.5 million with a lead gift of \$4 million from Polygon Homes – a company founded by philanthropist Michael Audain. For the federal contribution I want to acknowledge the work of my predecessor as MP, Andrew Saxton, for the work he did in this file.

Together, the Polygon Gallery and the new North Vancouver Museum will form the nucleus of a cultural hub at the foot of Lonsdale – just one dimension of a unique mix of amenities and attractions now emerging on the city's waterfront including the Shipyards Lot 5 Development.

A tip of the hat to the North Vancouver Mayor and City Council for their persistence and ambition in pursuing this vision. And to the many partners – public and private – who are now contributing to its realization. They are all part of this collaborative effort aimed at building a richer, more vibrant and stronger community.

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