



MEET YOUR MAYOR

By: Jason Syvixay, Editor-in-Chief

When Winnipeggers called on new leadership to make our city more modern, visionary, and prosperous, Brian Bowman answered the call. In what many people are calling a landslide victory, Bowman, a 43-year-old business and privacy lawyer, will assume office as the new Mayor of Manitoba's capital. Citing new generation leadership as one of his main campaign pillars, Brian came into the election race as a fresh face in the political realm, advocating for a more open and accessible style of leadership to Winnipeg's city hall. The day after the election, I sat down with Brian to hear his thoughts about why downtown is one of our city's most important neighbourhoods, and some ideas for action in his upcoming term.

DOWNTOWN FAVOURITES

Downtown memory: Opening game of the return of the Winnipeg Jets

Coffee shop: Parlour Coffee

Restaurant: Shawarma Khan

Shopping: Albert Street in Downtown's Exchange District

Arts/cultural institutions/landmarks: Winnipeg Art Gallery, public art at the Millennium Library Park

JS: Congratulations, Brian. How are you feeling?

BB: I'm feeling excited. I'm feeling humbled by the number of Winnipeggers who gave me their trust and confidence and their votes. I feel a real sense of hope and optimism about what we're going to be able to do together. This election really was about whether or not Winnipeggers wanted to move forward and build a stronger Winnipeg. The fact that so many people chose to take a new path and one that is built on positivity – to me, speaks volumes about Winnipeggers.

JS: What has the response been like from your family, friends, supporters, and Winnipeggers?

BB: For family, friends, and supporters, the one thing that we've been reflecting on since last night, is the fact that we were really humbled to win and win on the right terms. I made the commitment early on that we wouldn't run a negative campaign, one built around old school politics. I genuinely believed that Winnipeggers would embrace a campaign that was built on a positive footing.

JS: Looking back at your campaign, what was the defining moment for you?

BB: There wasn't one defining point. The launch at the Winnipeg Art Gallery was a great way to start. We felt like we were growing momentum every day during the campaign. That's what gave me the energy to work harder. Every forum, every door we knocked on, every tweet, we were building momentum slow and steady, and we were doing everything on the right terms.

JS: You said in an interview, "I didn't expect to win. I didn't know what to expect, to be honest. We were working to the last minute." What does it mean to win in an election that predicted you being so far behind earlier on?

BB: On a personal level, it's very humbling when you have that many people that are kind enough to mark the 'x' on the ballot beside your name. I'll forever be grateful for the rest of my life. But again, this election was never about me. The next four years are not about me either, it's about Winnipeggers. My job is to make sure we bring the best out of our community and the best out of City Hall.

JS: What makes downtown a place for everyone?

BB: Downtown is what defines a city. When we look at the overall health of the city, we look at downtown. It's a community that all neighbourhoods share. Downtown is unique and needs to be treated in a unique way. It's fundamentally important for Winnipeg's future that downtown thrives and succeeds. I've made a commitment to expand downtown's residential numbers from 15,000 to 20,000 over the next four years.

JS: What are some of downtown's greatest strengths?

BB: Without a thriving business community, we wouldn't have the downtown that we have. We need more reasons for people to come downtown and spend their money and spend their time. We need to make sure the commercial, retail, and residential sectors are thriving. And of course, the arts and cultural, heritage, and creativity sectors need to be supported too.

JS: What challenges does our downtown face and how can we combat them? What approach would you take?

BB: Homelessness is one of the top issues in our downtown that needs to be addressed. Dealing with perceptions of crime. Quite often, Winnipeggers or others see members affected by homelessness and feel concerned for their safety. That's not always a fair assessment. We need to do more for those who are homeless. That's why I've made a commitment to hire 5 new Community Homelessness Assistance Team (CHAT) outreach workers. I've been impressed by the success of this program run by the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ.

JS: What are your top priorities moving forward over the next couple of months?

BB: At a high level, I am looking forward to meeting the elected councillors. Winnipeggers have elected a very good group of people to lead the city on a go forward basis. Top priority is to make sure we hire a great Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and start to affect greater openness and transparency. I want people to know that the City is there to support them and not act as an obstacle for us to get things done together in the community. There is going to be positive change at City Hall.

JS: And finally, one last tough question. What types of artwork will you add to your office?

BB: Winnipeg Blue Bombers & Winnipeg Jets jerseys.