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Moscow Mayor Sobyanin Seeks New Term to 'Finish Reforms'

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Sergei Sobyanin (Vedyashkin Sergei / Moskva News Agency)

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin has told the business daily Vedomosti he will seek another 5-year term to see through extensive reforms, including a controversial urban renewal program.

Sobyanin's ambitious "My Street" urban renewal program was recently extended beyond its 2018 deadline. Described as "the biggest renovation program in Moscow's modern history," the project's costs are expected to more than double to $3.5 billion by 2020.

Sobyanin's plans to demolish thousands of aging apartment buildings and relocate around 10 percent of Moscow's population sparked mass demonstrations this summer.

Asked by Vedomosti whether he plans to run next fall, Sobyanin said, "We can say with a high degree of probability that yes."

"I believe it's my duty to finish the reforms that are taking place in the city," he said in an

interview published late Monday.

Sobyanin named health care and metro construction as projects that he would like to complete because "nothing is done on its own in our country."

"No sooner than we relax a bit, stop keeping track of expenses, we'll be like some — I don't want to point fingers — shouting that we have no money."

Warning that "everything would stop" if he didn't oversee the renovations, Sobyanin stressed that "it would be very unpleasant and painful to me if that happens."

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