

Mayor Leduc speaking notes

- Good morning everyone.
- It is great to be back at the beautiful Club at Bond Head, which is now owned and operated by Golf North. Golf North has a stellar reputation for excellence, successfully managing 40 golf courses across four provinces.
- I would like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank Golf North Chief Operating Officer, Mike Garside ... Golf North Director of Operations, Kevin Bailie ... and Catering Sales Manager Dianne Haddock and her team for their wonderful hospitality.
- Let's give them a round of applause!
- Thank you to the Bradford Board of Trade for partnering with us, as well as the Office of Economic Development for organizing today's breakfast, and to our speakers Geoff McKnight, Peter Loukes, Alan Wiebe, Michael Disano and Michael Kemp.
- When I was on the campaign trail last year, COVID was finally in retreat ... and after three challenging years, I had the opportunity to speak to people face to face.
- They discussed our challenges as a growing community ... and their concerns for the future.
- I took these messages to heart and made sure that we would have a progressive vision and strategic outlook for the next four years that addressed the concerns I heard when I was 'pounding the pavement'.
- One key element is an open and ongoing dialogue. Opportunities for public engagement will be a renewed focus of BWG during my mayoral term.

- I implemented a new Open House series called Community Access Networking, to provide opportunities for members of the public to speak directly to me, to Deputy Mayor Raj Sandhu and their local Ward Councillor.
- I encourage everyone to come out to these forums to ensure that any questions you have about your town are addressed.
- Our next session – for Ward 3 – is scheduled for this Saturday at 10 am at our new Fire Station on Melbourne Drive.
- In my years of public service, I have always placed respect for the taxpayer at the forefront of every decision made about municipal services.
- We have emerged from the COVID emergency to a very different socio-economic landscape. New economic challenges have replaced the challenges of managing a pandemic.
- Supply chains remain under strain, the labour market remains in flux ... and we are all grappling with effects of inflation.
- Everything costs more. We can't escape or avoid this reality.
- After months of rigorous review and revisions, we have approved a 2023 budget that includes a 5.63 per cent increase.
- This is a tough – but necessary – measure to ensure that the concerns I heard on the election trail are addressed, strategically and practically. (needs versus wants)
- Safety and opportunity were two themes that kept emerging in discussions with our residents, and I intend to deliver on these.
- This budget includes a new Fire Services Master Plan ... a new fire training officer ... 12 new firefighters in 2023 and an additional 8 firefighters in 2024.
- This new crew of firefighters will precede a second new fire station, to be built in the next few years.

- Sadly, we have seen the devastating impacts that a fire can have, when a dozen residents were hospitalized and more than 100 were displaced from the apartment complex at 114 Holland Street West in 2021.
- This could have been much worse, if not for the swift response time of our fire crews.
- We need to ensure that our growing community maintains this rapid-response capacity. Our new investments in fire services will ensure that our residents, our homes and our businesses are protected.
- The displacement of these residents also highlights the critical need for affordable housing. This problem is affecting municipalities across Canada, and we need to address it now.
- Working with our partners at the County level, I am proud of the investment of a 50-unit affordable housing project at 125 Simcoe Road. Construction is already underway, and will be the first step in redeveloping the Community Centre and surrounding lands into a new Town Hall and multi-purpose facility ... complete with passive recreational opportunities and outside entertainment.
- We aren't a small community anymore. And our growth projections have us doubling our current size by 2051. Consolidating our town operations makes strategic sense. We cannot continue to offer the services that our residents deserve, with our staff scattered amongst multiple leased office spaces and no central location for Town Council.
- The surrounding recreation fields will also be complemented with new investments in many of our parks.
- Lions Park will have a \$500,000 investment to upgrade the Lions building into a new Youth Centre. We heard repeatedly from residents that our youth need safe spaces for recreation, and we are delivering. The new centre will have scheduled programs as well as drop-in services.

- Further to this, Luxury Park will have a \$700,000 facelift, which will see new multi-use courts, multi-use trails and other amenities. The existing playground equipment will all be upgraded and modernized.
- The Danube Seniors Centre has been a popular fixture in our community for decades, and it will be refurbished and receive a much needed \$40,000 upgrade to the HVAC system.
- The BWG Library, which is quickly becoming the centre of town – in addition to its position as a tremendously popular social hub – will see an investment of \$200,000 to design a Town Square on the west lawn that will be used for outdoor performances and public gatherings.
- These local amenities are critical to the health and welfare of our residents, as well as keeping resident spending local. Too often, the lack of local amenities has sent residents – and their wallets – elsewhere. We want this spending in the pockets of our merchants!
- Our dynamic growth is bringing a wealth of diversity to our community. We welcome the opportunity to include new groups into our social fabric.
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will be on the forefront of our strategic agenda, to ensure that all voices are welcomed, heard and respected.
- In addition to the creation of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee – which is chaired by Ward 1 Councillor Cheraldean Duhaney, the first Black woman to sit on Council – I also am pleased that as part of our investments in town parks is the inclusion of a new cricket pitch at Joe Magani Park.
- Cricket is played and celebrated internationally, and this is a phenomenal opportunity to bring a new sporting amenity into town and welcome sports enthusiasts from our wider community.
- Our new Strategic Vision has five core priorities – which reflect our commitment to the themes of safety and opportunity:

1. Community and Traffic Safety

2. Infrastructure and Upgrades for Major Access Roads
3. Economic Development
4. Downtown Revitalization
5. Recreation and Leisure Facilities and Services

- In the spirit of openness and community engagement, we have reformed our Advisory Committee structure to better reflect our strategic vision.
- The Traffic & Community Safety Committee and Heritage Committee will be maintained, and in addition to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, we are adding a Green Initiatives Advisory Committee and Strategic Projects Advisory Committee.
- As you've heard from all the speakers today, infrastructure is critical to our residents and our businesses – particularly enhancing our roads network. Bringing environmental best practices into this equation only makes sense, to ensure a healthy and vibrant community.
- Our expanded road network offers exceptional economic opportunities.
- We look forward to the Bradford Bypass – or 400/404 Link – to create a third interchange in our Highway 400 Employment Lands ... building on our successes of redeveloping the exchange at Highway 88 and the recent addition of our interchange at Line 5.
- We have welcomed many multinational companies and thousands of jobs to this area, and the full development of these strategic land parcels will continue to offer financial, economic and employment opportunity for decades to come.
- I look forward to seeing how we can build upon our business incentive programs to enhance, expand and improve the competitiveness of our local enterprises ... and continue our successful efforts to further develop robust commercial and manufacturing sectors.

- Business interest in BWG is at an all-time high.
- We receive inquiries daily from business owners, site selectors and developers, looking to invest in our community.
- As we attract more companies to our municipality, our Development Application Review will prove invaluable ... ensuring that our resources and processes are optimized to get businesses through the critical planning stages as efficiently as possible.
- This process will be fully complemented by our Corporate Review – maximizing efficiencies in all aspects of Town business to best deliver programs and services to our residents. Doing this before we centralize staff at our new Town Hall just makes sense.
- We have a number of challenges ahead of us.
- We are going to hit bumps along the way.
- Growth and change are never easy, but we are putting the plans in place to ensure that Bradford West Gwillimbury is well-positioned to thrive, socially and economically.
- Communication has been an ongoing theme of my address today ... and in the spirit of improving our communication to residents, I wanted the opportunity for this group to be the first to get a 'sneak peek' at our new Town website.
- I mentioned that our needs are outgrowing some of our older ways of doing business.
- Our existing website is hosted and maintained by the County.
- It has served us well, but to be truly responsive, we need these capabilities locally.
- Our new site is fully mobile-friendly, engaging, informative and fast. It has superior search functionality and fully integrated Google translate.

- There is a wealth of information that is constantly updated, with dynamic content.
- It has information about living in BWG, easy-to-access steps for getting a business license – and links to our main repository of business information on our Economic Development website – gotobwg.ca
- I invite you to learn more about Town Hall and Council business and our wealth of recreation and culture programs and offerings
- This new site represents a great step forward in community engagement and will serve as a primary resource for residents.
- Before I entertain questions, I want to announce today that I look forward to returning to The Club at Bond Head on June 16, when we host the Mayor and Council's Golf Tournament.
- Sign-ups begin the first week of April and there are many sponsorship opportunities. I hope to see you there!
- Thank you all for coming today ... and thank you for your commitment to our town.