

# 2024 State of the City

City of Leduc Mayor Bob Young

May 29, 2024



## Welcome

Hello everyone. It's my pleasure to be here today to help welcome you to the Chamber's annual State of the City event.

I'd like to extend my gratitude to the Chamber for organizing today's event, and to the Royal Hotel for hosting us.

## Community Highlights

The City of Leduc continues to attract individuals and families seeking a vibrant community to call home, organizations searching for locations and facilities to host events, industry looking to expand or relocate, and professionals looking to contribute to our thriving economy.

Last year, Leduc witnessed remarkable growth with the construction of 352 new residences.

Our population has now surged to more than 36,000 people according to our 2023 municipal census. That marks an impressive 9.2% increase from 2019.

What's even more remarkable is that this growth has not come at the expense of our residents' satisfaction.

According to our 2023 Citizen Satisfaction Survey, a resounding 96% of residents rate their overall quality of life as excellent, very good or good.

With that mind, I want to express my gratitude to the business community for your investment in Leduc and for providing exceptional products, services, and jobs that enrich the lives of our residents. Your commitment to our community is truly appreciated.

## Construction

Setting our community up for sustainable growth and prosperity depends on infrastructure investment that keeps pace with the needs of our expanding population and business community.

The 65 Avenue Interchange remains our largest ongoing construction project.

Graham has made significant strides over the last year with road reconstructions, bridge work, and more.

This interchange is poised to be a game-changer for our city and regional partners like Edmonton International Airport.

It's going to support safety, facilitate easier movement of people and goods, and stimulate continued economic development.

A roundabout on the east side of the QEII will facilitate access to the west side and manage the traffic flow from both new and existing overpasses.

Another roundabout on the west side of the QEII will connect drivers to the airport area, back on to the QEII, or to the west neighbourhoods of Leduc.

New on and off ramps will improve safety and access to and from the QEII from the west side of the city.

And some additional improvements that are being made with this project include a multiway path that connects the east and west sides of Leduc, and a noise barrier wall where the Willow Park neighbourhood backs on to the highway.

The investment from the Province in this infrastructure is a testament to their support of our future development, and it's already sparking increased interest from investors.

In fact, we've seen a considerable increase in inquiries about development along 65 Avenue.

And plans for two new industrial land development projects are underway east of the highway to create 24 new industrial lots on more than 60 acres.

Interchange construction is expected to be complete late next year, and I'm looking forward to seeing our partners, businesses, investors and residents reap the benefits that it will bring to the region.

This isn't the only exciting development ongoing in Leduc, though.

I've been pleased to see continued growth happening in the west end, including the new high school and the addition of new businesses in the area, like Shoppers Drugmart and Vahagn's - a new independent grocer.

And we've also been thrilled to add the Leading Edge Physiotherapy pickleball courts to our many outstanding recreational facilities. This new amenity supports our Sport Tourism priorities and has already been booked for future events like the Alberta 55 Plus Provincial Summer Games.

While we build this exciting infrastructure, it's also important to give back to the earth and ensure our natural environment remains sustainable and set up for a healthy future.

With federal funding from the 2 Billion Trees program, we are planting an urban forest on City land.

Our goal is to plant 20,000 trees. The planting we did in 2023 has us just over halfway there, and we expect to reach 20,000 this year.

We will monitor and nurture these trees so that they can flourish and provide ecological benefits and increase wellness in our community for years to come.

## Development and Permitting

Further indicators of Leduc's attractiveness for investment and our robust local economy include our building and development permit totals and their estimated construction values.

In 2023, this included more than 1,500 permits with a total estimated construction value of \$151 million.

Moreover, our ability to efficiently process these permits underscores the City's commitment to providing excellent service and supporting investment in the community.

With an average permitting time of just 4.1 days – which is faster than most communities in the province – we're not only attracting investment but also facilitating it, ensuring Leduc remains an attractive destination for businesses and developers.

Even the Premier highlighted this at the 2023 Alberta Municipalities Convention, where she applauded our fast permitting and approval times.

This isn't the only time the province recognized the City of Leduc last year—we were also awarded the Minister's Award for Municipal Excellence in Red Tape Reduction for the recent changes to the AVPA regulation.

The AVPA changes have prompted and influenced important municipal planning initiatives that will guide the future growth and transformation of our city.

For example, we're revisiting our Municipal Development Plan to identify opportunities to

enhance residential and business development in ways that used to be very limited.

We're also developing an Urban Centre Area Redevelopment Plan, which will guide the future growth and transformation of Leduc's Urban Centre.

As we prioritize community input in our planning processes, we've learned that residents value walkability and safety. Planning for the Urban Centre ARP will continue with robust community and business engagement into the year ahead.

## Businesses

And speaking of our city's vitality, local businesses are the heartbeat of our community. It is essential to us that you thrive and feel supported in your endeavors.

Last year's business satisfaction survey provided valuable insights, and we've gained meaningful information to help address top priorities for improving local business satisfaction.

It also revealed that businesses in Leduc are highly satisfied with the area as a place to operate and that many would recommend Leduc to fellow entrepreneurs looking to expand or relocate.

What's even more encouraging is Leduc's positive economic forecast for new and existing businesses. Our city outperforms provincial averages in expected staff changes, expected future revenues, and attitudes among business owners.

This optimism is mirrored in our 2023 business license numbers, which were up 9% from 2022 and reached a five-year high.

It's clear the future is bright and full of potential. Looking ahead to this year, we're starting to build an Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan to help foster even more growth and prosperity.

Stay tuned for details to come, as we'll be looking for input from the business community

throughout the process.

While we pave the way for more opportunity and development, we're also keenly aware that safety is another essential component for business to thrive. We know ensuring the safety of your property, staff, customers, and yourselves is of primary importance.

We've heard concerns about safety downtown, and the RCMP and Leduc Enforcement Services are working together to increase patrols in the area.

The RCMP's most recent report is encouraging, with crime trending downwards by 19 per cent over 2023, including fewer instances of break and enters, vehicle thefts, and other thefts.

Public safety remains a top priority for the City of Leduc, and we will continue to collaborate with the RCMP, residents and businesses to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone in our community.

## Advocacy and Collaboration

Our dedication to collaboration doesn't stop at our city limits. We're constantly seeking opportunities to partner with neighbouring communities and regional stakeholders to enhance investment, support local businesses, and promote sustainable growth across the region and province.

We actively participate in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board, which works on responsible land-use planning and regional infrastructure investment.

We also participate in the Mid-Sized Cities Mayors' Caucus, which advocates for the needs and priorities of growing mid-sized cities in Alberta.

Thanks to this caucus' advocacy efforts, the province will be allocating \$16 million over three years to some growing mid-sized cities – including Leduc - to help cover the cost of infrastructure needs, such as the servicing of new investment sites.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, 2023 was a year of significant progress and achievement for our city, and we're poised for another productive year ahead.

I encourage you to explore the City's 2023 Annual Report for more details on our accomplishments. It was published just yesterday on our website.

Before I wrap up and we open the floor to questions, I'd like to point out our City of Leduc Economic Development team is here with us today—Tara and Carley.

They are a fantastic resource for businesses in Leduc, and I encourage everyone to connect with them.

Thank you to everyone here today for your continued support and dedication to our city's success.