

State of the City 2025

Mayor Bob Young

April 4, 2025

Today is an opportunity not just to reflect on where we've been or where we are.

It's a chance to look ahead to where we're going.

Community Growth

Leduc is a rapidly growing city.

That is a testament to the strength, resilience, and innovation of our residents and businesses.

Between 2019 and 2023, the City of Leduc's population grew by 9.2 per cent.

The 2024 federal Census shows we are at a population of over 37,000.

I believe this is closer to 40,000 today, although our next municipal census will be in 2027.

In 2024, we issued building permits for 629 new residential units, compared to 352 in 2023.

That's an increase of 79 per cent.

Leduc is a place where people want to live, work, raise families, and start businesses.

And we're only getting started.

This means we must plan carefully to ensure that, as we grow, we remain a city that is vibrant, connected and welcoming.

One exciting piece of news on this front is that the City of Leduc was recently selected as a recipient of the Housing Accelerator Fund.

We will receive \$7.6 million through the fund to address housing needs in Leduc.

Based on the Housing Needs Assessment we completed last year, we know there is currently a need for more studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units in our city.

We also know we need to ensure a significant proportion of future housing development includes rentals and non-market units.

This funding will help provide the resources we need to accelerate the development of much-needed housing initiatives and to address the current gaps in our housing supply.

With this support, we will advance the City's Housing Strategy and strengthen partnerships with developers, non-profits, local landowners, and community organizations.

Our goal is to create 1,330 housing units by the end of the three-year program.

Given our typical permitting times—which are recognized by the Premier as the fastest in the province—that means we aim to create 244 more housing units than normal.

Over the next two years, the City will create a new Land Use Bylaw, which could incorporate several initiatives from our Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan.

We'll:

- Consider zoning changes that better allow us to meet our housing needs,
- Develop parking and transportation studies and strategies,
- Explore tools that create greater variety of housing choices,
- And address barriers to make it easier for people to move to Leduc.

Housing is the foundation for opportunity.

When people have stable housing, they are more apt to thrive.

I'm proud that Leduc is taking steps to prevent housing instability.

As we move forward, I want to thank the Government of Canada, specifically the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, for seeing the value in investing in Leduc.

Economic growth & development

It's not just our population that's growing.

Our economy also continues to thrive.

Development proceeds at a flat-out pace.

In 2024, we issued 98 commercial, industrial and institutional building permits.

Combined with residential permits, the city experienced a total construction value of more than \$217 million in 2024.

This was a significant increase over 2023, which saw \$151 million dollars of construction.

And, as of mid-March this year, we've already issued 169 development permits. Businesses continue to invest in our community as well.

We issued nearly 2,300 business licenses in 2024, similar to 2023.

Despite some global challenges, our business community is persevering.

From established businesses to new ventures, we saw and continue to see Leduc's entrepreneurial spirit shine.

We want to ensure this continues.

To that end, we've been building an Economic Development Strategy with extensive public input.

This is a blueprint aimed at propelling Leduc into a future of economic prosperity.

Building on strengths and leveraging opportunities, it will set the course for sustainable and diversified growth.

More details are coming soon.

We also continue to see sports tourism play a key role in supporting local businesses, bringing in visitors, and showcasing our community on a larger stage.

We've hosted many high-profile sporting events over the years.

We've welcomed athletes of the highest caliber and eager fans of a huge diversity of sports to Leduc.

Our world-class facilities, volunteers and businesses have provided exceptional hospitality experiences that keep bringing people back.

In addition to bolstering community pride, these events bring significant benefits to our local economy.

Money is brought into our hotels, our restaurants, and our shops every time we host an event.

Like the 2021 Junior Girl's Golf Championship.

That event welcomed 400 out-of-town visitors and was the first amateur youth national championships to be hosted in Canada since COVID-19 began.

It was held right here at the Leduc Golf and Country Club, and had a direct visitor spend in Leduc of more than \$221,000 at local businesses.

There was also Softball Canada's 2024 Canadian Slo-Pitch Championships.

It brought in more than 2,000 visitors from across the country who spent over \$1.6 million.

And the 2016 Alberta Summer Games, which had a massive economic impact of over \$11 million nationally, with \$890,000 in direct visitor spending here in Leduc.

Not only that, but they supported more than \$3 million in capital upgrades and \$250,000 for 13 legacy projects that our residents and visitors continue to enjoy to this day.

Those are just a few events, and the momentum continues.

Leduc continues to stand out nation-wide in sports tourism and attracts significant events.

This upcoming summer, we'll be hosting the Alberta 55 Plus Summer Games.

This is expected to generate more than \$425,000 in direct visitor spending in Leduc.

All this investment indicates confidence in Leduc's future—and that future is bright.

Huge opportunities are at our doorstep.

Thanks to the 65 Avenue Interchange, four quarter-sections of land are becoming available for commercial, industrial and residential development on the west side of the highway.

Most of the area will be known as the Leduc Landing Business Park and will be home to a wide range of enterprises.

The opportunity available there will attract new industries, create jobs, and provide more space for businesses to establish and grow.

A small portion will be residential, and that area could begin development as early as this year.

We've also been working on a plan to revitalize Leduc's Urban Centre.

This includes the Central Business District, Alexandra Park neighbourhood, and Telford House area.

It is the first redevelopment plan we've undertaken in Leduc and has also involved extensive public engagement.

Once complete, it will promote mixed-use development, walkability, and cohesive neighbourhood design—all while maintaining our flexibility for future growth.

Infrastructure Investments

All of this must be supported by smart investments in infrastructure. On that front, we are making significant progress.

The 65 Avenue Interchange will be complete this summer.

This is a game-changer, both for our residents and for regional partners like the airport.

It will support safety and connectivity.

It will facilitate easier movement of people and goods.

And, like I mentioned earlier, it unlocks a huge swath of land for development.

Not only that, but additional improvements for the community are being made with this project.

A multiway path will connect the east and west sides of Leduc.

And a sound attenuation wall has been added where the Willow Park neighbourhood backs on to the highway.

While this expansion drives economic growth, it also comes with additional responsibilities.

As our community grows, so must our emergency response capabilities.

We must invest in the safety and well-being of our residents and our businesses.

That's why we're adding a third fire station to Leduc.

We'll break ground this spring on the northeast side of the city in the Harvest Industrial Business Park.

This location is important.

We expect that it will improve emergency response times for the industrial area by nearly 25 per cent.

It also means that we will have emergency responders on both sides of the train tracks.

This will help to ensure the reliability of our emergency services for the entire city.

But planning for the future doesn't stop there.

We're building a new cemetery to ensure the needs of our community can be met with dignity and care well into the future.

And we've built another snow storage facility to help improve winter operations as the number of roads we clear increases.

Everything we do, we do with an eye on the horizon.

Annexation

That brings us to our need to expand Leduc's municipal boundary.

Ours is one of the fastest growing communities in Alberta.

We need a 50-year land supply to make sound decisions to support future growth.

This is best practice to enable proper planning for our community's needs.

However, a land supply evaluation completed in 2023 estimated that we may have less than 20 years of land supply left—however, with our recent spike in growth, this could be closer to less than 10 years.

We are currently looking at the amount of land needed to accommodate Leduc's projected growth for the next 50 years.

That is why we have started the legislative process of changing the city's municipal boundary to the south and southeast.

In 2012, we heard through public hearings that people had a desire for the city to expand to the south.

Based on what we know right now, that is the best direction for the City to grow to avoid impacting higher quality agricultural land, and to most efficiently accommodate growth.

Annexation is an important part of planning for Leduc's future.

It does not change land ownership.

It does not mean lands will be developed immediately.

It does not require landowners to change how they use their land today.

It simply means that the land would change from being a part of Leduc County to being a part of the City.

This will ensure that long-term growth can be accommodated.

It will ensure we have the land and infrastructure needed to support our expanding population and economy.

It means more opportunities for business, more housing options, and more space for recreational and community services.

This is about planning ahead.

It's about ensuring that we are prepared for the future.

The annexation process will take some time. There is a lot to still learn and explore to help ensure we make the best decisions.

This year, we are focused on conducting technical studies that will help to solidify the quantity of land required.

Updated population projections will be developed.

And, in 2026, we look forward to hearing from landowners in Leduc County and residents in Leduc.

Several steps must be taken before an annexation application is submitted to the Land and Property Rights Tribunal and the provincial government makes a final decision.

And throughout the process, we are committed to working collaboratively with Leduc County and to engaging with landowners as the process unfolds.

Closing

We've come a long way.

Our city is growing.

Our economy is thriving.

Our community is stronger than ever.

But there's always more to do.

We are responsible for shaping the future.

We must create opportunities for the generations yet to come.

None of this is possible without the dedication of our residents and you—our business community.

Thank you for all that you do to make Leduc an incredible place to live, work and invest.

Our continued collaboration will ensure we maintain prosperity and a strong future for everyone.

In my six terms on City Council, two of which as Mayor, I'm proud of everything we've accomplished.

Thank you.