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# **Town Hall Meeting**

## **Considering Separated City Status for BWG**

**April 15, 2019**

# Agenda

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1. Opening comments from Mayor Keffer & Deputy Mayor Leduc
2. Presentation on Regional Government Review and Separated-City Status
3. Comments and questions from the audience
4. Closing remarks from Mayor Keffer

# Regional Government Review

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- provincial government reviewing regional governments and Simcoe County
- involves nine upper-tier municipalities and 73 lower-tier member municipalities
- assessing municipal governance, decision-making and service delivery
- led by two former municipal administrators; they are gathering input from elected officials, municipal and business stakeholders and members of the public
- advisors will provide recommendations to Minister of Municipal Affairs this summer



# Simcoe County & BWG



## Simcoe County & BWG

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- due to its proximity to the GTA, small-town attributes and relative affordability, the town has experienced a tremendous amount of residential and commercial development over the past several years, as evidenced by a population growth rate that was the second-highest in Ontario between 2011 and 2016
- BWG is a lower tier municipality situated within the County of Simcoe, which is comprised of sixteen towns and townships
- Simcoe County has an estimated population of 305,000 people and is the second largest county in Ontario based upon population and third largest based upon land area
- Barrie and Orillia are located within Simcoe County but are administratively separate

# Service Responsibilities

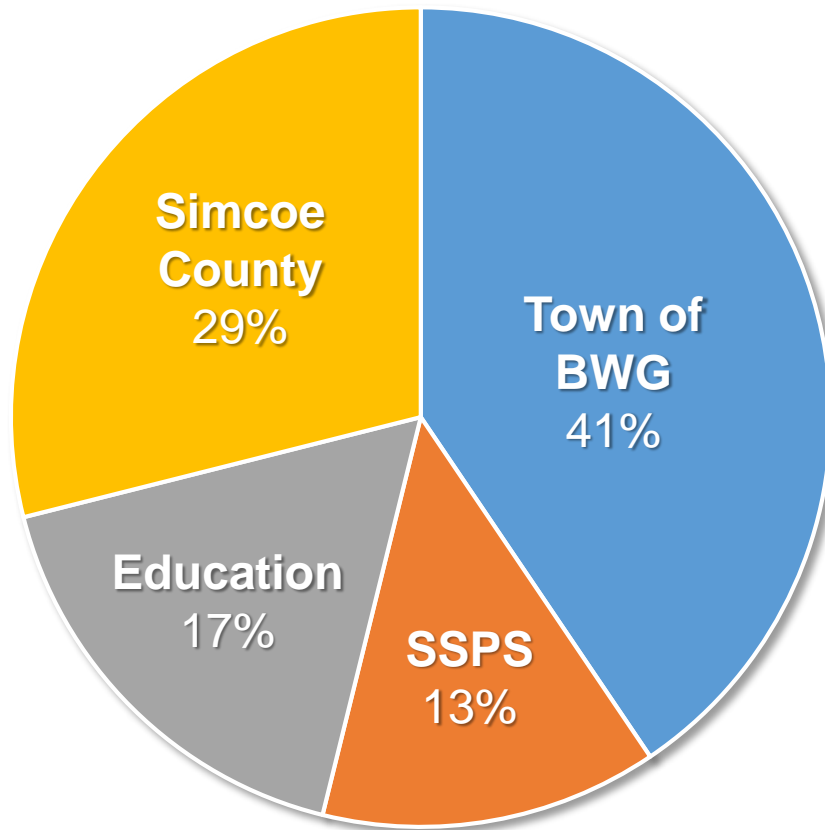
## **SIMCOE COUNTY**

- Social Housing\*
- Paramedic Services\*
- Waste Management\*
- County Roads
- Regional Transit
- Ontario Works\*
- Library Cooperative
- County Museum & Archives
- Long Term Care\*
- Children & Community Services\*
- Regional Planning, Eco Dev & Tourism
- County Forests
- Administrative Services

## **BRADFORD WEST GWILLIMBURY**

- Water & Sewer Services
- Local Roads
- Municipal Transit
- Public Library
- Recreation Services
- Parks & Facilities
- Police Services
- Fire & Emergency Services
- Planning & Engineering
- Licensing & Building Permits
- Economic Development
- Administrative Services

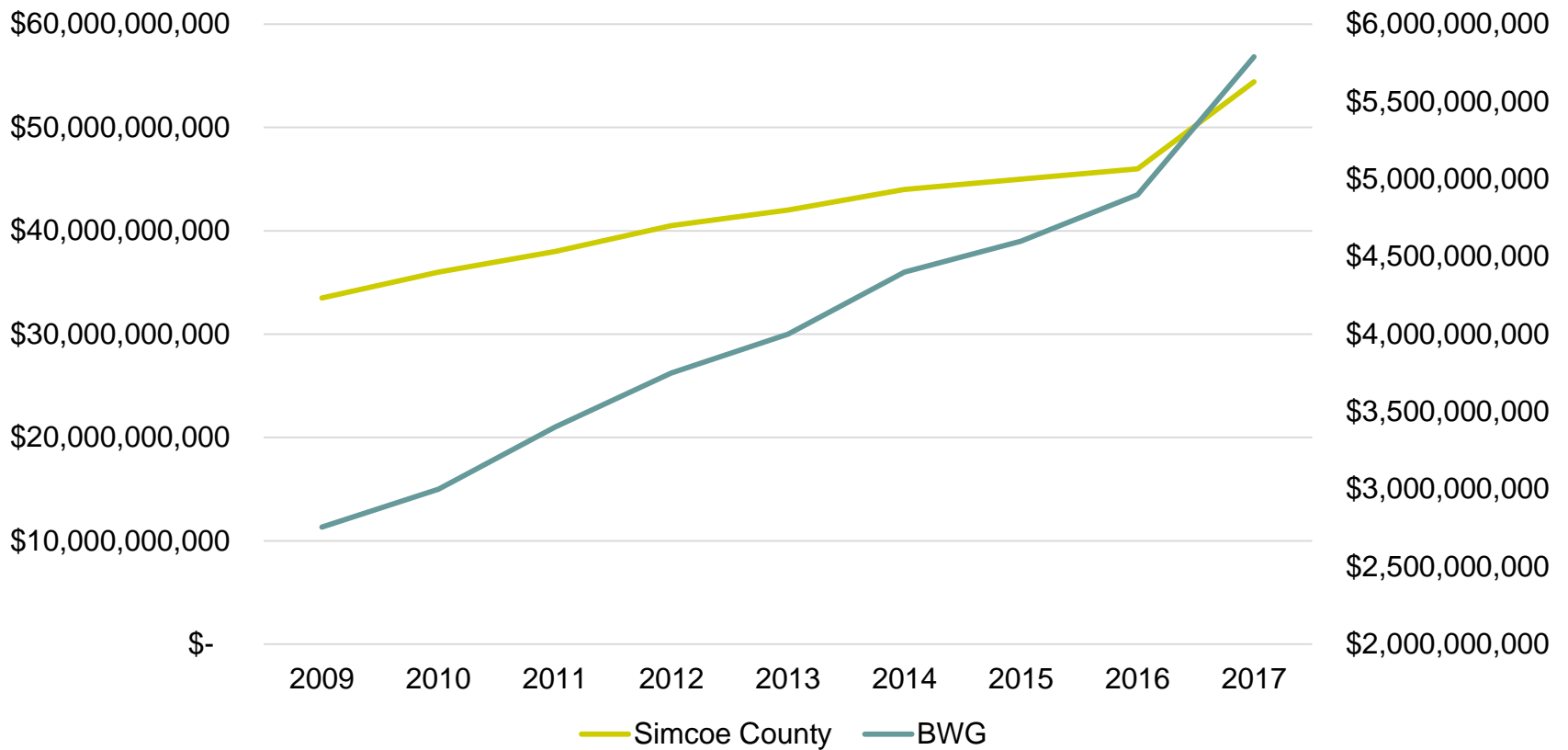
# Financial Relationship



Property Tax Bill:  
\$4,600

# Financial Relationship

## Assessment Growth

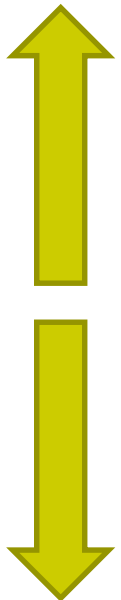




# Financial Relationship

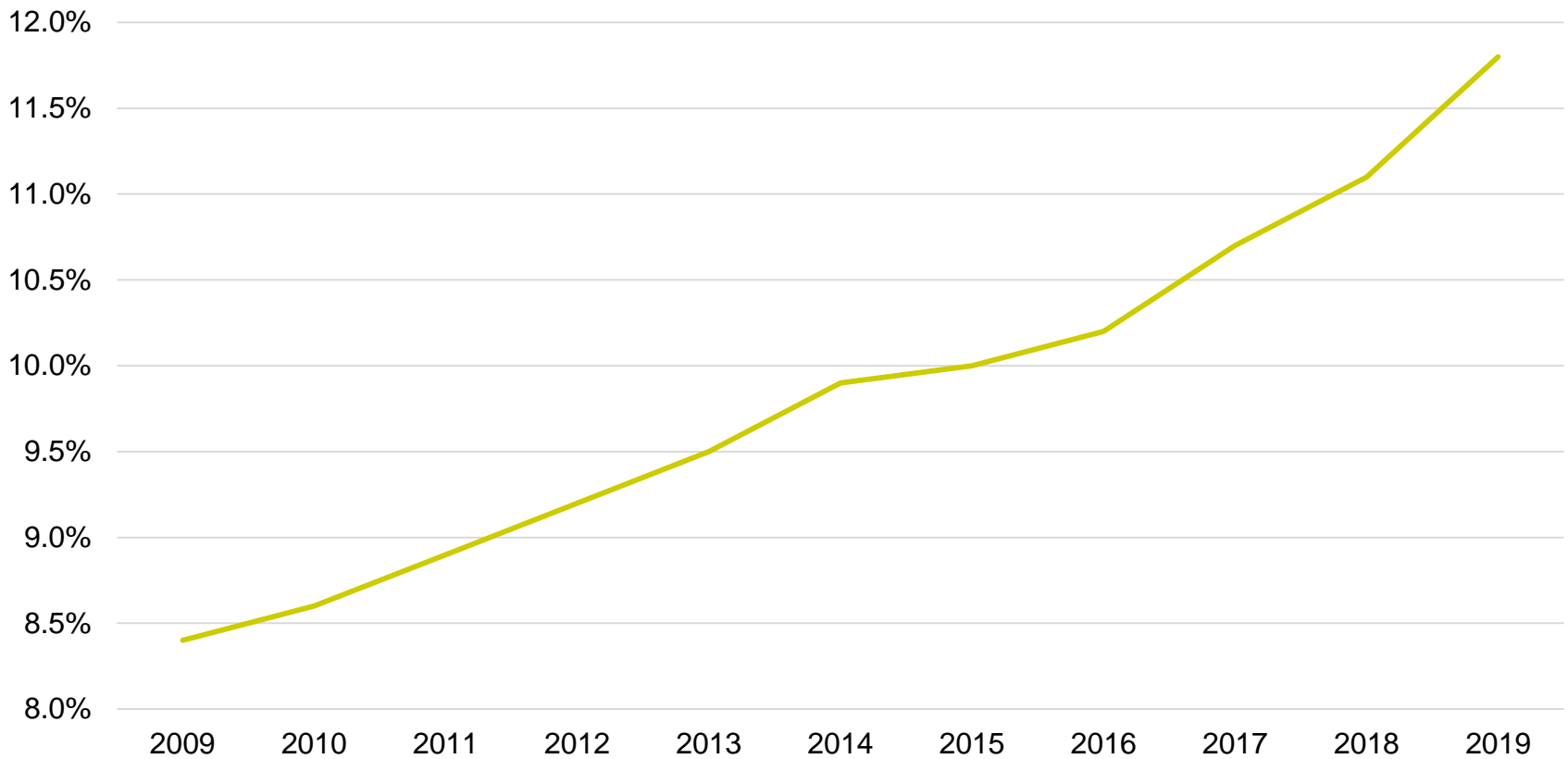
## REVENUE NEUTRAL INTER-MUNICIPAL TAX SHIFT

Municipality	2016 Levy	2017 Levy	\$	%
BWG	\$15.2M	\$16.0M	\$0.8M	5.16%
Adjala-Tosorontio	\$5.3M	\$5.4M	\$0.1M	2.03%
New Tecumseth	\$15.5M	\$15.8M	\$0.3M	1.70%
Innisfil	\$17.7M	\$17.8M	\$0.1M	0.73%
Severn	\$7.7M	\$7.6M	-\$0.1M	-1.60%
Wasaga Beach	\$11.8M	\$11.5M	-\$0.3M	-2.60%
Midland	\$6.0M	\$5.8M	-\$0.2M	-2.90%
Ramara	\$6.5M	\$6.3M	-\$0.2M	-3.00%



# Financial Relationship

## BWG Share of County Levy



# BWG-Simcoe County Inter-Tier Structural Review

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- retained Strategy Corp in 2017 to assess the impact of the shifting tax burden of County costs to higher-growth municipalities
- consultant was to address three key questions:
  1. Are BWG taxpayers receiving service levels that reflect their contributions to the County levy?
  2. Would BWG be better served by joining York Region?
  3. Should BWG become an independent municipality like Barrie and Orillia?

# BWG-Simcoe County Inter-Tier Structural Review

- determination of County tax levy is compliant with the Municipal Act
- between 2011 and 2017, the town's share of the levy increased from 8.9% to 10.7% (11.8% for 2019)
- 2016 MPAC reassessment affected BWG to the greatest extent among member municipalities (5.16% increase)
- BWG households contribute 13% to 59% more than the average of other lower tiers towards County operating costs
- several other municipalities also contribute more than the average
- the value of County capital projects undertaken in BWG (recent and planned) exceeds the town's DC contributions towards those projects (assuming that all planned projects are delivered)
- on a per household basis, BWG pays more for upper tier services than the separated cities

# BWG-Simcoe County Inter-Tier Structural Review

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## Strategy Corp conclusions (February 2018):

1. Are BWG taxpayers receiving service levels that reflect their contributions to the County levy?

*On a per household basis, BWG residents pay more than the average County household towards operating costs; BWG receives good value for capital projects (assuming that all planned projects are delivered), albeit timing may not align with need*

2. Would BWG be better served by joining York Region?

*No, it would likely be more expensive*

3. Should BWG become an independent municipality like Barrie and Orillia?

*While it may be advantageous, the provincial government is unlikely to allow the change*

## Separated City Status

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- County governments were established as upper tier coordinating bodies for rural municipalities
- as an urban area in Ontario became large enough to classify itself as a city, it was separated from the county and became a single tier municipality
- this allows the separated municipality to have:
  - greater autonomy for setting service levels (i.e. winter maintenance, waste management)
  - more effective prioritization of capital investments (i.e. timing of road improvements)
  - cost reductions through elimination of overlaps with upper tier
  - greater accountability to tax payers

# Separated City Status

BWG is of sufficient size and composition to succeed as a separated city

Separated City	Population
Orillia	30,500
Pembroke	13,900
Brockville	21,900
Owen Sound	21,300
Smiths Falls	8,800
St. Thomas	41,800
Stratford	31,500

# Separated City Status

Simcoe County Service Area	2019 Tax Funded	Ongoing BWG Cost	Overlap
Cultural Services	\$14M		\$1.65M
General Municipal Services	\$21M		\$2.48M
Paramedic Services	\$28M	\$3.30M	
Long Term Care	\$9M	\$1.06M	
Ontario Works	\$4M	\$0.47M	
Children & Community Services	\$4M	\$0.47M	
Social Housing	\$24M	\$2.83M	
Transportation	\$18M	\$2.12M	
Waste Management	\$36M	\$4.25M	
Planning & Eco Dev	\$6M		\$0.71M
Transit	\$6M		\$0.71M
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$170M</b>	<b>\$14.50M</b>	<b>\$5.55M</b>



## Separated City Status

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- separated BWG would continue to “buy” certain services from Simcoe County (i.e. EMS, LTC, Ontario Works, Social Housing), similar to Barrie & Orillia through service agreements
- existing partnerships would remain (i.e. SSPS, Innisfil water supply), and opportunities for new partnerships could still be explored
- the change would not impact other government jurisdictions/services (i.e. school boards, hospitals, conservation authorities)

# Conclusions

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- Simcoe County has served its municipalities well for decades but it is important to evaluate the County's scale and scope to ensure it is prepared for the forthcoming decades
- County Council manages an enormous portfolio across a broad geography comprised of 16 municipalities each with their own unique set of challenges and ambitions
- its impractical to think that key decisions on policy and program development, service levels and infrastructure investments can satisfy all interests
- for the foreseeable future, BWG will shoulder an increasing proportion of the County's tax levy
- the Regional Government Review provides a timely opportunity to fully explore the cost/benefits of extricating BWG from the upper tier

## Next Steps

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- Regional Government Review is ongoing
- Council will consider the following resolution on April 16<sup>th</sup>:  
*“That the Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing be advised that the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury wishes to pursue separated city status and asks that the Provincial Advisers be requested to work with town and County of Simcoe staff to further evaluate the benefits and implications of such a change.”*
- Simcoe County has initiated a financial analysis
- Provincial Advisors receiving Simcoe County deputations on May 13
- MMAH online survey and comments received until May 21
- Report to Minister expected early summer
- Timing of decision = ???

# Comments & Questions

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