

Mayor's Business Breakfast November 16, 2017 – Mayor Rob Keffer

- Good morning, and let me start by saying thank you to everyone for joining us here today.
- Every year, I look forward to the chance to speak about our economic growth in Bradford West Gwillimbury at this breakfast.
- So, thank you to the Bradford Board of Trade and our Office of Economic Development for once again putting on this event.
- And thank you to the staff at The Club at Bond Head for the delicious breakfast.

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- Today, I want to give a high-level assessment of where we are and where we still have to go as we work to build a better town, not just a bigger town.
 - I want to start there — we are becoming a bigger town, but we are working as hard as we can to manage that growth.
 - The fact is, we've grown to a town of over 35,000 over the past ten years. That number is nearly a doubling of our population in a decade.
 - We have to better manage growth, and as a Town Council, we are working hard to do so.
 - We've worked to develop our plans to build a better town, not just a bigger town, by focusing not on "suburban sprawl" but on smart growth where it makes sense.
 - That means balancing home building with job creation. It means ensuring we densify in our existing population centres, rather than just creating sprawling new subdivisions on farm land.
 - And it especially means an aggressive approach to solving traffic congestion.
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- Three years ago, I was incredibly honoured to be sworn in as Mayor of my hometown.
- Since then, working with Council, staff and the community, I am very proud of what we've accomplished.
- From “getting the little things right”, like fostering a more collaborative Council, rooting out waste through thorough budget deliberations, and keeping taxes as low as possible, we set a tone for an accountable, frugal and transparent Council from day one.
- That tone has led to success—whether by ...
 - opening Henderson Park;
 - moving forward with our jobs corridor along Highway 400;
 - getting the Highway 400-404 Link back on the province's plans;
 - expanding access to local child care;
 - starting to build not one but two assisted-living homes for seniors;
 - preserving our built heritage;
 - continuing to improve our roads and bridges;
 - bringing in energy-efficient street lights to save tax dollars and protect the environment;
 - planting more trees and improving the Canals;
 - increasing transit options, including in Town but also with weekend GO train service;
 - a much improved downtown with new businesses opening;
 - and, of course, our wonderful recreation, heritage and cultural events and activities...like the Canada 150 Parade!
- I'd like to highlight some specific initiatives that I think we will all be happy to see reach fruition --

- The Bekerman seniors' housing project, now known as "The Elden of Bradford" and located at 3131 Line 8.
 - This is a \$44.4 million project.
 - It will bring 152 Independent Supported Living and Assisted Living units of housing to our community.
 - It will also employ 80 staff when at full capacity.
 - Construction is currently full steam ahead, with anticipated completion next year,
 - Second is the Verve seniors' housing project, now known as "Holland Gardens" at 552 Holland Street West.
 - This is a \$33.7 million project that will provide 138 Independent, Memory Care and Assisted Living units.
 - The facility will employing 85 staff when at full capacity.
 - Construction is underway with anticipated completion by Fall 2018.
 - Both of these projects now have their own websites, so if anyone is interested in more details or would like to get on the roster, just Google the names and you'll find them.
 - Additionally, a grand opening was held in August for The Gables of Bradford, a boutique-style 16-unit condominium on Barrie Street that is marketed to seniors' independent living.
 - We are seeing other applications come in for independent living for both seniors and families, and expect more exciting developments in the near future.
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- To ensure we stay development-friendly, Finance staff are undertaking a review of the Town's Development Charge Bylaw to ensure that BWG is competitive with our neighbouring communities, while providing the funding we require for future infrastructure.

- Another exciting new development is by MiTek, which is building a new 240,000 square foot facility on a 15-acre parcel of land at Highway 400 and County Road 88.
- The new facility will consolidate MiTek's 140 BWG employees and add 60 from additional hires and from MiTek's operation in Thornhill. A sod turning event will be scheduled in the near future.
- And exciting possibilities with the Amazon bid, and interest in our Town from an International School.

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- While it's great to look at all that we have achieved, I am under no illusions -- I know that more must be done. And we're committed to making further improvements and changes.
- For instance, traffic is an issue that we're going to redouble our efforts to address.
- We've made progress with new roads, arterial routes, improved GO transit service and getting the Highway 400-404 Link back on the province's plans.
- 2018 is an election year for the Province. The provincial government has put the Link back in its growth plan, but now is the time to press forward and get all political parties to commit to design, fund and build the link.
- And there's more to do — smart signalling on traffic lights, continuing to build and repair roads and bridges, more parking at the GO station, and all-day GO train service.
- We need an “all-of-the-above” strategy when it comes to tackling traffic in town and across our region.
- It will take a collaborative effort to tackle these issues, and in fact I am meeting with East Gwillimbury Mayor Virginia Hackson tomorrow for discussions on how we can work together to help both of our municipalities.
- This Council did not create our traffic problems, but we will be the Council to help solve them.
- I hope to have more to announce about this in the coming days.

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- We're also going to continue to work to deliver jobs, whether by supporting small businesses in the downtown or expanding with exciting new opportunities along Highway 400.
- This balanced approach to managing growth, by building a better town with more jobs, better traffic management and smart growth is the right approach.
- The good news stories about BWG, and the Veterans Banners for Remembrance Day, and the 'Thank You' Signs by Francine in the Toronto sun, City TV and Barrie Media goes to the character of our Town.
- And there are some positives to growth: the school board has plans for new and renovated schools, and we'll work with them to ensure we have the child care and road safety needed as well.
- Working together with the province, the county and the federal government, I know we will continue to see progress.

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- I'm very proud of what Council has accomplished, and how we've worked well together. But there is so much more to do.
- Thank you for your support, your encouragement, your ideas and even your complaints — it's only by working together that we can build a better town.
- I'm proud of how local citizens have gotten involved and helped lead important efforts to build a better town, together.
- We're not finished; we have much more to do.
- Thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you today.