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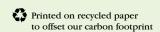


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## Remembering Former Board Member, Wendi Campbell

In January, we heard the sad news that our friend and former colleague on the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Wendi Campbell, had passed away. Wendi was a vibrant figure in our region and did everything she could to make our community a better place. Wendi leaves behind a massive legacy at the Food Bank of Waterloo Region where she worked for close to 25 years, including the last 15 years as CEO, along with a number of years in various volunteer roles and community-building activities throughout our region. I was fortunate to serve with Wendi on our Chamber board for four years, including my first year as Chair where Wendi was part of our executive committee as Vice Chair. Wendi was an excellent board member with the Chamber, she was active, engaged, and provided invaluable insights and advice to all the board members and management. Wendi regularly supported the Chamber's activities through attendance at and involvement in many of our events. As part of the executive committee, she was a great resource for me, and her expertise in not-for-profits, community organizations, and governance and strategy were very welcome. We were sad when Wendi had to step away from the board to focus on her health her wisdom and leadership were greatly missed. I think if Wendi was willing and able, she would have eventually made an excellent Board Chair for the Chamber.

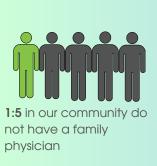
This issue of the Advocate is focused on the Business and Economic Support Team of Waterloo Region (BEST WR). This team includes our President & CEO Ian McLean, along with other community leaders from our region. BEST WR was created out of necessity during the pandemic, but has now refocused on Vision One Million and what our community will need to do to be prepared for when our population grows to a million people. The Chamber and other great regional organizations will continue to do whatever they can to live up to Wendi's vision of making our community a better place.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

## Scott Gilfillan

Scott Gilfillan is a chartered professional accountant and a partner with PwC in assurance, as well as their Waterloo Market Leader. Scott focuses on providing clients with audit and accounting advice while acting as a trusted business advisor.



HEALTHCARE & PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT PROGRAM

> "This community initiative relies on the support of the local business community to ensure we can meet the needs of our growing community"

> > our community.



Access to healthcare is one of the top factors considered when relocating to a new community. Are you committed to ensuring your workforce has access to primary care in order to recruit and retain the best

Canada is expected to welcome 460,000 newcomers every year. Having access to adequate healthcare is critical to the success of newcomers integrating into

"a growing community with growing needs"

OF LOCAL PHYSICIANS ARE AT RETIREMENT AGE

Currently 70,000 + residents in our community do not have a family physician with risk of 50,000+ additional residents if recruitment efforts aren't taken to replace the retiring physicians.

contact Jenna Petker to support this community initiative: jpetker@greaterkwchamber.com

and brightest talent?

## Managing Growth Across the Region of Waterloo

The population of the Region of Waterloo is expected to grow to almost a million residents by 2051. While this target is less than three decades into the future, serious planning and decisions are required in 2024 to prepare for many new homes, businesses and infrastructure that our community needs.

Local growth will require big investments in infrastructure from all levels of government. One decade ago, our Chamber partnered with the Toronto Region Board of Trade to connect our municipalities through two-way, all-day GO Train passenger services. This expanded to include Boards of Trade across the Toronto-Waterloo Corridor including Guelph and Brampton. Improved transit services between Waterloo Region and Toronto benefits all of our communities.

While pandemic-related construction delays have occurred across Ontario, improved transit connections with the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) must remain a priority for our membership and community. The movement of people between the region and Toronto has been extensively analyzed and employers require transit options for their employees living outside our community.

As we grow as a community, another critical priority is the construction of a new hospital. This project will take time and we should remember that site selection is the first step in a long process for improving primary and specialist care for local residents. The business sector will be strong advocates for this project in order to ensure the Ontario government acts on the urgent need for more healthcare infrastructure and services to support our growing population and economy.

The Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce has managed local physician recruitment activities for twenty-five years, originating from local employers indicating that a shortage of local primary care professionals was restricting their ability to attract qualified employees in high demand occupations. Our Chamber was among the first business organizations in Canada to assume a leadership capacity in the healthcare sector and we expect our responsibilities and efforts to continue with our expanding population base.

In collaboration with our municipal partners, the local business sector will continue to lobby the federal and provincial governments for financial support on our local infrastructure priorities that support economic growth. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce has noted that all levels of government have increased investments into our aging national infrastructure. As an export dependent nation, trade enabling infrastructure is the portfolio that creates the greatest long-term economic benefit.

The Region of Waterloo economy remains heavily dependent upon international trade. We are strategically located in the middle of North America's largest markets, where connections with consumers and suppliers in New York, Boston, Chicago or Detroit can be reached within a one-day drive.

Waterloo Region currently has the infrastructure capacity to move products on Highway 401 and relatively quick access to border crossings at Buffalo and Detroit. Our rail network provides regional and international transportation of goods with connections to Atlantic and Pacific ports. Significant new investments will be required by all levels of government to ensure support for business expands with local economic growth.

In 2022, more than 21,400 people relocated to the Region of Waterloo from around the globe, accounting for 90 percent of annual growth and the local population reaching 633,828. Our Region needs newcomers, but we need to be prepared as a community to receive them and ensure they will be successful and welcomed when they arrive. A November 27, 2023, article in the Waterloo Region Record by Jeff Outhit indicated the federal government is considering a series of options to increase local housing supplies. This needs to complement efforts of the provincial and local governments.

Mary Ng, federal minister of export promotion, international trade, and economic development, noted she is encouraged to see Waterloo Region attract people from around the world. A larger pursuit of international migration will assist with international trade, innovation, and prosperity.

But it is clear that planning, cooperation, and collaboration while it has started among all levels of government and the business community – need to be amplified and accelerated to meet the urgency of the moment. The need is great, and time is short, but we must ensure that programs and infrastructure are in place for our community of a million citizens.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR Ian McLean

Ian is President and CEO of the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce.



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## Provincial Strategies to Support Economic Growth

The Province of Ontario and Region of Waterloo are preparing for significant economic and population growth expected over the next thirty years.

Businesses and employers are familiar with a local forecast of 923,000 residents by 2051. However growth will not be confined to our municipality alone as similar patterns are expected across Ontario, particularly the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH). The provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing expects the population base around the western shore of Lake Ontario to reach 14.8 million residents by the aforementioned year.

Both the Ontario government and Region of Waterloo are implementing aggressive and hopefully effective strategies to prepare for this anticipated growth. In the larger context, a significant level of attention is increasingly directed at the relationship between Queen's Park and local municipalities, particularly financial assistance from the provincial government or new revenue options.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), in their 2024 Pre-Budget submission to the provincial government, advanced a formal request for a collaborative effort on reviewing costs, revenues, infrastructure demands, and service delivery requirements. Current fiscal arrangements are not working for communities or the businesses at the foundation of local economies.

A considerable level of media and public attention has been focused on the New Deal between Ontario and the City of Toronto to address on-going financial issues across the province's largest urban centre. In late November of 2023, an agreement was formally announced where the provincial government will provide \$1.2 billion in funding for city transit including subway investments, homelessness, shelters, and discussions around the longer-term sustainability of municipal finances and operations.

A major component of the deal is the province assuming responsibility for the Gardiner Expressway and Don Valley Parkway. Toronto has agreed to terminate all opposition to proposed provincial changes at Ontario Place.

In subsequent weeks, an alarming number of Ontario municipalities have cited their on-going financial challenges which urgently require provincial intervention. Region of Waterloo Chair Karen Redman noted in November 28, 2023, correspondence to Queen's Park that 650,000 local residents deserve the same respect for their tax dollars and an equal opportunity to thrive in Ontario.

Chair Redman further stated in a Waterloo Region Record article on November 30, 2023, that there exists a real recognition "municipalities cannot continue to deliver the services that we

have been and that our residents expect us to deliver on the property tax base." It is approximately \$180 million that the region is backfilling for provincial and federal programs, and the upper levels of government are required at the table for further discussions around resolutions.

Municipalities outside of Toronto are seeking a greater share of income tax and GST and the new deal for Toronto should be a precedent for other municipalities.

There is general agreement across all sectors – private, municipal, healthcare and post-secondary – that further support and financial assistance is urgently required for the construction and maintenance of essential infrastructure. In their 2023 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review (Fall Economic Statement), the provincial government formally announced the new Ontario Infrastructure Bank, a board governed agency that will allow public-sector pensions and other institutional investors to financially participate in large-scale infrastructure projects across Ontario.

This new organization will, according to the Ontario government, deliver more infrastructure faster while leveraging additional capital from investors. The bank is commencing their operations with a \$3 billion injection from provincial treasuries. From the local perspective, stakeholders across the private and public sectors will need to maintain pressure on the province to ensure infrastructure funding is equitably distributed and that projects supporting the Greater Toronto-Hamilton Area (GTHA) are not disproportionately benefiting at the expense of rural and northern regions.

As the population and economy of Ontario increases over the next three decades, the provincial government must support projects across all regions of the province. A Toronto-Queen's Park deal cannot solve all financial challenges.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Art Sinclair

Art is Vice President Policy and Advocacy for the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce.

## McMaster MD 2026 Welcome: Recognizing Faculty Achievements

In 2007, the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce Chamber Health Care Resources Council (CHCRC) warmly welcomed 15 inaugural undergraduate medical students, marking the commencement of their first-year studies at the newly established McMaster University, Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine, Waterloo Regional Campus (WRC).

Over the years, the enthusiastic reception of 17 additional classes has continued this tradition, witnessing the graduation of those who have transitioned to various residency programs. Many graduates secured postgraduate positions in the Kitchener-Waterloo Family Medicine Residency Program, along with Residency in Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Pediatrics, and Psychiatry. The choice of many graduates to practice in the Kitchener-Waterloo region makes a significant impact on the local community. By staying where they learned, these healthcare professionals contribute to continuity of care, strengthen community bonds, and address specific regional healthcare needs. In 2022-23, the clinical capacity in the region varied and was vast in scope, reaching 26,577 days where clinical clerks and residents trained in the clinical sites of the WRC catchment area.

This past December, the Chamber proudly sponsored the annual WRC Welcome Gala held at The Walper Hotel in downtown Kitchener for the 32 undergraduate students from the MD Class of 2026 and 29 Postgraduate Year 1 Residents in Family Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, and Psychiatry. Excellence in Teaching and Mentorship Awards were also presented at this event which is dedicated to celebrating learners, faculty, and staff for their outstanding achievements and contributions within the medical community.

The gala welcomed current undergraduate medical students, postgraduate residents, student advisors, faculty leadership, standardized patients, local McMaster faculty and staff, and sponsors. Together, they acknowledged and honoured physician preceptors and advisors whose exceptional contributions helped enrich the educational experiences of medical students. Medical learners and residents independently submit nominations for the Faculty Awards highlighting teaching that has impacted learning experiences. This year, medical learners and residents submitted 28 nominations in 14 teaching categories, and the student awards committee reviewed and selected the final recipients.

The WRC is fortunate to have such esteemed physician educators and mentors within its faculty. These individuals deserve commendation for their role in enhancing the educational journey of these ambitious and talented future healthcare professionals. As a community, we are privileged to host these dedicated learners who contribute to the vibrancy of our region through their medical training and residency programs.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jennifer Tran

Jennifer Tran held the role of Communications and Community Engagement Coordinator at WRC from 2018 to 2023 and now serves as the MD Admissions and Enrolment Coordinator at the Hamilton campus.















































Photos by Jason Panda and Lori Crewe



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#### Wavemakers

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## **Event Highlights**



A Bird's Eye View of members and exhibitors at the Libro Business After 5, hosted at Heffner Lexus & Heffner Toyota



Our Title Sponsor, Libro Credit Union speaking with a member at the last Libro Business After 5.



Immigration Partnership had a tabletop display at the Libro Business After 5 at Heffner Lexus & Heffner Toyota.



Our wonderful speakers and host, Christine Hyde, Meaghan Dietrich, Alexandra Pinto, Colleen James, Angie Hill, Anandi Carroll-Woolery, and Destiny Moser at our Heffner Women's Leadership: 60 Career Lessons in 60 Minutes!



Guests share on the "Things We Love" board at the Heffner Women's Leadership: 60 Career Lessons in 60 Minutes event.



Guests at our Heffner Women's Leadership: 60 Career Lessons in 60 Minutes network together during breakfast.





Members and Committee Member Becca Faber of Creekside Hearing at the Libro Business After 5 gathering around to meet our youngest guest of the evening!



 ${\it Members \ at \ our \ MNP \ Speed \ Networking \ event \ in \ their \ first \ round \ of \ networking!}$ 



A full room at the Walper Hotel, members greet Alexandra Pinto to the stage in preparation to hear from our amazing 6 speakers at our Heffner Women's Leadership: 60 Career Lessons in 60 Minutes event!



Mentors Lois Ratts, Ready2Grow Associates and May Rodriquez, Rise in Wellness enjoy conversation with mentees at the Ginger Goat Chamber Young Professional Mentor & Mix Mingle.



In less than an hour, guests made over 30 new connections during the MNP Speed Networking event.

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## Vision One Million (V1M)

As the Waterloo Region in Ontario sets its sights on accommodating a population of one million people, its vision extends far beyond mere numerical growth. With recent accolades placing it among the top 20 tech hubs in North America, the region is poised for remarkable transformation. At the heart of this evolution are exceptional post-secondary institutions, including the University of Waterloo, Conestoga College, and Wilfrid Laurier University, which serve as incubators for innovation and talent. The presence of globally renowned companies such as OpenText, D2L, and Magnet Forensics underscores Waterloo Region's capacity to attract and nurture industry leaders.

However, with growth comes the imperative to address various challenges. The pressing need for investment in housing, health-care infrastructure, transportation, and urban development requires proactive strategies and collaborative efforts. This vision for growth must prioritize sustainable and inclusive practices, ensuring that the benefits of progress are accessible to all residents.

## What kind of barn do we want to build?

The BestWR table recently convened a bus trip to Detroit, a city of the same population as Waterloo Region going through its own remarkable transformation. Mayors, the regional chair, CEOs, founders, and civic leaders piled into the bus at 5 a.m. for a three hour briefing during the drive, an inspirational conversation with mayor Mike Duggan and his team in the new \$1.5 billion innovation district in downtown Detroit, and energizing facilitated conversation about "what kind of barn do we want to build?"

This article is meant to continue this important conversation. Waterloo Region has immense potential. We know that when we come together to build the barn, we can compete with anyone in the world. We also came to the conclusion that we need to come together on Vision 1 Million (V1M) if we are to realize our full potential and not drift into a series of loosely connected projects.

At its core, Waterloo Region's V1M for accommodating one million people is not merely about expanding population but about creating a vibrant and livable community that fosters innovation, prosperity, and well-being for all residents.

V1M encompasses all six key pillars:

 Tech Hub of North America: Waterloo Region's recent recognition as one of the top 20 tech hubs in North America is a testament to its thriving innovation ecosystem. Building on this momentum, the region aims to further solidify its position as a global leader in technology and innovation. By

- nurturing a conducive environment for startups, attracting top talent, and fostering collaboration between industry, academia, and government, the region seeks to drive continued growth and innovation in the tech sector.
- Academic Excellence: Central to the region's success are
  its world-class post-secondary institutions. The University
  of Waterloo, Conestoga College, McMaster University, and
  Wilfrid Laurier University are renowned for their cutting-edge
  research, entrepreneurial spirit, and talent development
  programs. As the region grows, these institutions will
  play a pivotal role in fuelling innovation, producing skilled
  graduates, and driving economic prosperity.
- Global Leading Companies: The presence of globally leading companies such as OpenText, D2L, and Magnet Forensics underscores the region's capacity to attract and retain toptier talent and businesses. These companies serve as anchors within the ecosystem, driving economic growth, fostering innovation, and providing employment opportunities. We need to continue to celebrate and support these homegrown champions.

# A new innovation hospital will be the cornerstone of health innovation for the province and beyond.

- Investment in Infrastructure: Accommodating a population
  of one million people necessitates significant investment in
  infrastructure. This includes the development of affordable
  housing options to ensure housing affordability for residents
  across various income levels (70,000+ new units required).
  Investment in health-care infrastructure, including hospitals
  and medical facilities, is also essential to meet the growing
  health-care needs of the population. A new innovation
  hospital will be the cornerstone of health innovation for the
  province and beyond.
- Transportation and Urban Development: Addressing transportation challenges is critical to ensure the region remains accessible and connected. This involves investing in public transit systems, Stage 2 ION, active transportation options to ease congestion and improve mobility, and a new world-class transit hub. This new transit hub can and should be the new front door of Waterloo Region, signaling our vibrancy and ambition to build a world-class city of one million citizens. Urban development initiatives must prioritize sustainable and inclusive design principles, creating vibrant, walkable, and livable communities for residents.

World-Class Placemaking: Placemaking efforts are integral to shaping the identity and character of the region as it grows. This involves creating vibrant public spaces, cultural amenities, and recreational facilities that enhance quality of life and foster a sense of community. By prioritizing placemaking initiatives, the region can create attractive and inclusive environments that attract talent, investment, and tourism. We need to be the place where people in their 20s want to live and build their lives and careers.

## Waterloo Region has the critical ingredient for success: talent.

In considering the vision for Waterloo Region's growth to one million people, it's imperative we come together with one holistic vision. V1M can and should be that blank canvas for everyone in the region to come together and co-create. If we do this, nothing will stop us. As Malcolm Gladwell said at the Detroit Auto Show last year: "Waterloo has the critical ingredient for success: talent." Gladwell used his hometown of Waterloo as an example, noting that after the collapse of BlackBerry and the loss of thousands of jobs, the region was reborn as a tech hub that is the secondlargest in North America. "The management may have left, but most of those smart people stayed and started up businesses," Gladwell said. There was also a lesson during our trip to Detroit.

That city is home to the 27th-largest tech hub, while Waterloo Region is in the top 20. But Detroit looks like a Mack truck in the rearview mirror coming up in the passing lane. We have no time to waste.

Gladwell's observations on the intersection of technology, society, and culture offer valuable perspectives on the opportunities and challenges associated with rapid growth and technological advancement. By embracing the power of our community and leveraging the region's strengths in technology, education, and innovation, Waterloo Region can realize its vision of becoming a dynamic, inclusive, and prosperous community for generations to come. Let's get to work and build the V1M barn!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR Chris Albinson

Chris Albinson is CEO of Communitech and returned to Waterloo Region three years ago after 20 years in Silicon Valley. He is a member of BestWR and Health Innovation tables of civic leaders.



## Mark Your Calendar

Friday, March 8th, 2024

International Women's Day Breakfast

8:00 am - 10:30 am

Location: Crowne Plaza (105 King Street E, Kitchener, ON)

Member: \$65

Future Member: \$100

We invite you to join us to recognize & celebrate outstanding achievements of women in our community and around the world. The 2024 theme is #InspireInclusion. When we inspire others to understand and value women's inclusion, we forge a better world. And when women themselves are inspired to be included, there's a sense of belonging, relevance, and empowerment. Together, we can forge women's equality.

The International Women's Day Breakfast is an annual event held in partnership between the Greater KW Chamber of Commerce and respected community leader, Karen Redman.

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Thursday, March 21st, 2024 2024 Business Excellence Awards Gala

5:00 PM – 10:30 PM Three ways to attend:

Gala & Dinner at Bingemans: SOLD OUT Live Viewing Party at Waterloo Brewery: \$95

Virtually from your home: \$30

Join us in recognizing local businesses who have made exceptional contributions to the community in the past year, through their dedication and leadership. With 14 awards being handed out to exceptional individuals and organizations, it's a night you won't want to miss.

Title Sponsor:



Wednesday, April 10th, 2024

Ginger Goat Chamber Young Professionals: 45 Questions

Time: 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Location: Workhaus (290 King Street E, Kitchener ON)

Member: \$45 Future Member: \$60

\*\*ticket includes complimentary headshot\*\*

Join us as we hear from four speakers as they are a totally of 45 pieces of advice related to entrepreneurship, leadership, personal branding, and more much! If you are a young professional looking for career advice and mentorship then this is the event for you!

Title Sponsor:



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## Wednesday, April 17th, 2024

### 2024 Business Expo

2:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Location: Bingemans - Marshell Hall (425 Bingemans Centre Drive,

Kitchener ON)

Admission is FREE for the general public!

8' x 8' Exhibitor Booth: \$360 10' x 10' Exhibitor Booth: \$380

The Business Expo, with over 200 exhibitors, is hosted by the Greater KW, Cambridge, and Guelph Chambers of Commerce. The event features outstanding food vendors, fun and interactive booths, and outstanding networking opportunities for job hunters, entrepreneurs, and businesses. Come try delicious, local food and beverages, pick up some free swag, and make new professional connections. The Business Expo offers FREE admission for all attendees! Don't miss your opportunity to market your company to 1,500+ members of the Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, and Guelph communities.

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## Tuesday, April 30th, 2024

### Libro Business After 5: Spring Edition

5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Location: Cowan (705 Fountain Street N, Cambridge ON) Member: complimentary, recommended \$10 donation to our

**Feature Charity** 

Future Member: \$40 donated to our Feature Charity

Come and join us at Cowan for fantastic networking opportunities in welcoming environment. Engage with local businesses at their booths, savour refreshments, and make the most of the numerous possibilities at this BA5 event, such as building relationships, generating sales, obtaining referrals, seeking mentorship, receiving advice, and much more!

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Feature Charity:

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## Mark Your Calendar

Thursday, May 2nd, 2024 **MNP Speed Networking** 

8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Location: TBC

Member: \$55 \*\*Includes a breakfast buffet\*\*

Future Member: \$95

The Speed Networking event is always highly anticipated, and now its in person! Start your day by meeting other business professionals in a

quick (yet effective) method of networking.

Title Sponsor:



**Supporting Sponsor:** 



Thursday, May 9th, 2024 2024 Manufacturing Summit

12:00PM-4:00PM

Location: Frank Hasenfratz Centre for Excellence in Manufacturing

(700 Woodlawn Rd W, Guelph ON)

Member: \$65

Future Member: \$120

Exhibitor: \$285 \*\*for Members only\*\*

The annual Manufacturing Summit is hosted as a way to bring the manufacturing and supply chain communities together in the Region. We are the heart of Canada's most productive manufacturing cluster. With all the challenges facing the industry, companies need to lean into digitalization to ensure success with their people, products, procedures, and processes. So, this year, we'll be focusing on Smart Manufacturing & Industry 4.0 because the future of manufacturing is

here.

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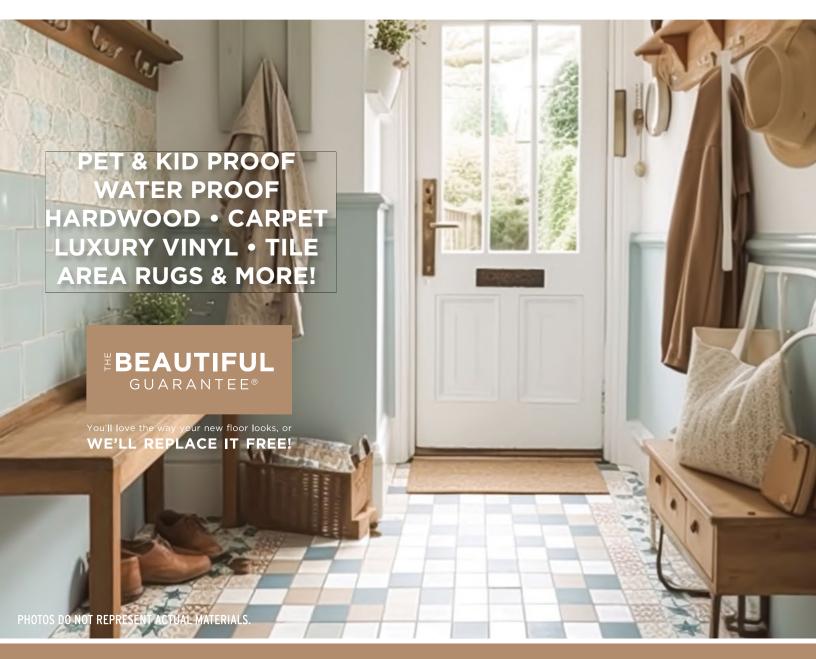
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## Tourism and Vision 1 Million

Waterloo Region is poised for significant population growth. From a tourism marketing organization's perspective, the impending demographic shift provides a unique vantage point to steer the region toward sustainable development and enhanced visitor experiences. Explore Waterloo Region looks at the destination through the lens of the visitor as it's our job to market the Region for leisure visitation, business and sporting events. Currently tourism brings in 5M visitors and over 557M a year in revenue.

As we look to build a world-class community that will attract residents, it should be noted that places that are planned around increasing tourism are almost always great places to live. Residents benefit from vibrant retail, attractions, sporting venues and restaurants in the same way tourists do. In fact, the tourism brand itself becomes a very powerful tool. People may come to our Region for the first time for a quick getaway or to attend a meeting or sporting event. They may love what they see here and then choose to move here, invest here, or send their kids to school in one of our wonderful academic institutions. Some years ago, Deloitte did a study that indicated that for every 1% increase in tourism arrivals nationally, it could mean up to 830M over the next 2 years in trade. Tourism is economic development.

World-class places to live, work and invest also need world-class places to gather. Currently the Region is unable to host large meetings and conventions as we do not have a Convention Centre. Explore Waterloo Region proactively pursues meetings and conferences to support the work of economic development in the Region; that being groups associated with high tech and advanced manufacturing. We are currently funding a feasibility study to determine how a Convention Centre could benefit our region, exploring different funding models as well as the best locations to consider. We need to be aware we are leaving business on the table if we do not invest in new infrastructure (Convention Centre) and address upgrading older facilities like the Aud.

The challenges faced by the tourism industry are consistent with those in many other sectors: labour shortages, lack of affordable housing and good public transportation connecting the Region.

Service sector jobs are not all high-paying BUT to attract highly skilled tech and other talent, we need a strong service sector to make our Region an appealing place to live. "All Day Two Way Go" and the expansion of the LRT are not only essential for locals, but they are also a selling proposition for visitors. Sustainability is a pillar of the Tourism Master Plan, and it sets us apart when bidding on events demonstrating how we might reduce the carbon footprint of large groups.

Another of our unique selling propositions is that we offer cities on the edge of nature. Continuing to plan for green spaces, trail networks and integrating the "farm to fork" mentality into our urban areas all makes us a special place to visit and to live. Leveraging our diversity into our arts and culture celebrations can continue to be part of our brand. If we plan our community around the needs of growing visitation i.e. public parking, washrooms and street beautification, we are also ensuring we are planning for the future influx of residents.

As Waterloo Region braces for the milestone of 1 million residents, a strategic approach to planning will be imperative. A focus on place-making as it relates to infrastructure development, connectivity, cultural enrichment, destination branding and sustainable practices, will ensure we shape our destination into a thriving, inclusive and attractive place for residents and visitors alike.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michele Saran

Michele Saran is the CEO of Explore Waterloo Region. She has over 30 years of experience in the Tourism industry at municipal, provincial and federal levels. Explore Waterloo Region markets the area as a destination for Business Events, Sport tourism and leisure travel.

# 



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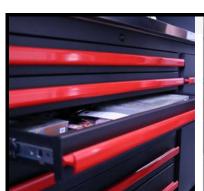
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## Growth = Opportunity + New Challenges

When I became Waterloo EDC's inaugural President & CEO in 2016, the population in Waterloo Region was about 530,000 people. Since then, we've gained 100,000 more residents. In the next six years, it is forecasted that we'll add 100,000 people, and by 2051 it's possible that we'll top one million.

Over the last few years, I've often reflected on the saying "may you live in interesting times." The prospect of potentially doubling our population between 2016 and 2051 means the coming years will indeed be interesting.

How so? Well, our population growth will come with huge opportunities and challenges.

From an investment promotion perspective, becoming one of Canada's largest communities would help us gain greater profile around the world. Significant population growth is usually coupled with economic growth, which helps attract investment. Companies want to grow where growth is evident and a large labour pool is attractive to growing companies.

Such growth also heralds significant challenges. The type of challenges that have shaken places like San Francisco. Can we keep up with the housing needs of this population? Will we have well-paying jobs for these people? What about social necessities like day care or doctors? Can we reduce homelessness or deal with other issues of social justice? Can our community solve these types of problems?

These questions are all important to growing companies.

Apart from building as much housing as possible, wherever we can, there are a few priorities for ensuring sustainable growth – growth that everyone benefits from – in Waterloo Region.

Anyone who knows me can guess my first priority: employment lands. I'm a broken record on this subject, but it's simple – if you don't have land for new industrial investment you won't attract any new industrial investment. We also won't have space for existing manufacturers to expand. It is urgent. We are three years into a secular manufacturing investment boom and that's unlikely to last forever.

Manufacturing currently accounts for 1 in 5 jobs in Waterloo Region. To sustain that ratio, we'd need to add about 75,000 manufacturing jobs. It's a big number and we can't reach it without attracting a mega investment to support the localization of global manufacturing supply chains.

Our community also needs to invest in transit.

A community with one million people is a big community and our existing roadways simply can't handle the growth in demand. We need to extend the LRT into Cambridge and continue to invest in connections within our community and toward Toronto. Not only does transit build connections, but it also creates new opportunities for significant high-density residential construction. More jobs, more homes.

Finally, we need to make all elements of social justice a priority.

If social justice is a balance of the distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges within a society, homelessness and affordability should not be an issue. You shouldn't need to be a software engineer to afford Waterloo Region. A just community cares about reducing marginalization, celebrating diversity and solving social problems.

Communities where people get left behind are not good communities and they won't attract massive new investment. If we return to this discussion in five years and we haven't moved the yardstick on homelessness, affordability and marginalization, we will have failed – as a community and as economic developers.

To make this vision of an equitable, desirable Waterloo Region with one million residents come to life, we all need to roll up our sleeves and put in the work. We can build the community we want. Growth comes with challenges and problems, true, but Waterloo Region is a community of proven problem solvers. We've been there, done that.

Let's get to work!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

## Tony LaMantia

Tony LaMantia is President & CEO of Waterloo Region Economic Development Corporation. A University of Waterloo alumnus, Tony's had executive roles in investment marketing, technology sales and mining, as well as the public sector where he was ADM of Investment and Industry (Ontario).

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## Let's Do What This Region Does Best!

We have heard this for a long time now, by 2051 (likely earlier) this region is going to be 1 million people strong. I know many don't want change, in fact will fight change, yet even they know, that change is inevitable. One thing I know for sure is, that most of the people who want to fight change today, would not want to go back to the 1800s in the Region of Waterloo, they like where we've come, but they just want it to stay the same. Fortunately, we have generation after generation coming behind us all, who want things to change, they want their community, not your community.

In the 21st century, it is all about "place". Many can work remotely, thanks to technology, most jobs are in every community, and skills are more and more transferable so, what keeps you in the place you are? Certainly, not the home you live in, that is transferable to anywhere, it's not the office or plant you work in, they are all over the globe, it is usually a couple of things. First, it may well be family that keeps you where you are, but what if you came here for school, lived here for 4 years, and likely did a co-op in a local business and maybe even got a job offer from that business, what will get you to take that job and become a new resident of the Region of Waterloo? It will always be "place!" Is there a transportation network that is accessible and easy to navigate, do you have all the services you need, like a family doctor, is the entertainment value of the community what excites you and are there opportunities beyond your current offer of employment to grow and become more than you are. Are there other like-minded people who will become your new friends and family as you build your life here in the Region?

It is more than the job, it's the entirety of the place we call home. Vision 1 Million is about the elements our region is missing, to attract, retain, and delight the next generation of Waterloo Region residents, not to mention, to also inspire top-notch employers to consider landing right here in the centre of the universe, to employ those very residents, and even attract the brightest and best from around the world to live, work and play right here in our community.

Some will say that is 27 years away, what is the rush? Well, 40 years ago the Ministry of Health said that Cambridge and North Dumfries residents were underserviced from a healthcare perspective and an expansion of Cambridge Memorial had to be undertaken. Yes, I know, that took 40 years to complete. Well, we need 70,000 homes for those new residents, we've never built that many homes in 27 years, and some may say it's impossible, but we must. I sat in a planning meeting in 2001 at Regional

Headquarters talking about the LRT from Waterloo to Cambridge, it took 18 years to see the reality of ION, we need phase 2 yesterday because that will inspire place-making and economic revitalization along the spine and create that entertainment and activity space that residents of the 21st century expect. Phase one of the LRT spun off 3 billion dollars of private economic investment, and phase two will spin off many more billions in private economic investment, to build a 21st-century community.

Vision 1 Million isn't about 2, 3, or 4 projects, it is about every project it takes to move us to a place where we need to be to support the needs of 1 million people, to have the infrastructure to support the economic health and safety of our community, it's a vision for better, more inclusive, more cooperative and certainly a more vibrant place to call home. This is not about "build it and they will come", they are coming, like it or not. If you're a community leader, it is your responsibility to ensure we meet the needs, if you are a community resident, it is time to get excited about what is to come, if you are just a "no" at every turn, it is sadly a time for you understand that change is inevitable and there is nothing you can do to stop it. This Region has been changing for many years. I can show you pictures of Scott's Opera House at Queens Square in downtown Galt, not there anymore, or the Kress Hotel with horses and buggies out front on King Street, a dirt road at the time, or Hespeler Road, when it was farmland and dirt road. Some will say they would like to go back there, the problem is, the clock never moves in that direction, it only knows it needs to press on, exactly like we do, but we should do it with a clear and concise Vision of what that future holds. I'm proud to be part of a visionary group of leaders like Ian McLean Greater KW Chamber, Michele Saran Explore Waterloo Region, Tony LaMantia Waterloo Economic Development Corporation, and Chris Albinson Communitech, from Business to Innovation and Community Assets, they have the vision and are my inspiration, I hope they are the communities as well. Let's get excited, let's get on board, and let's do what this Region does best, build with vision!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

## Greg Durocher

Greg is a former business owner, a former City Councillor, and for the past 23 years the President/CEO of the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce.

## 2024 Membership Milestones

We'd like to thank all of our members for your support over the years and want to congratulate the following companies who are celebrating these Membership Milestone Anniversaries in 2024.

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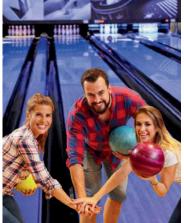
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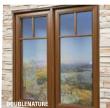


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## **Chamber Members Achieving Success**



## Andrew Coppolino Departing from the Region of Waterloo

Andrew Coppolino, described as one of the most authoritative voices on the local food scene through his regular restaurant reviews, will be departing the Region of Waterloo this spring.

Jody Palubiski of The Charcoal Group noted that Coppolino has transitioned from being a critic to an advocate, proponent and ambassador for local food. Through these frequent reviews, smaller and independent startup businesses have created many opportunities for many people.

Andrew supported the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce through his participation at many events and related functions. He recently indicated in a Waterloo Region Record article that he will miss Waterloo Region but wants to be closer to family in the Ottawa area. The Chamber wishes him well in all future endeavours.



## John Chen Retires from BlackBerry

BlackBerry Limited recently announced the retirement of John Chen as their Executive Chair and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Richard (Dick) Lynch was appointed Board Chair and served as Interim Chief Executive Officer until the appointment of John J. Giamatteo as Chief Executive Officer on December 11, 2023.

Giamatteo was President of BlackBerry's Cybersecurity business unit and acquired over 30 years of experience with global technology companies. Prior to BlackBerry he was President and Chief Revenue Officer at McAfee, Chief Operating Officer at AVG Technologies, and held a leadership position at Nortel Networks.

In an October 30, 2023, company news release, Director Prem Watsa indicated "the BlackBerry Board of Directors would like to express its gratitude to John for his decade of strong leadership. His achievement of saving BlackBerry and repositioning it as a software company with leading Cybersecurity and IoT technologies has been remarkable."



## New Chair and Vice Chair at Waterloo Regional Police Services Board

The Waterloo Regional Police Services Board elected Ian McLean as Chair and Karen Redman as Vice Chair during a meeting on January 17, 2024.

Mr. McLean has served as President and CEO of the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce since September of 2010. He also served seven years as a Councillor for the City of Waterloo and has been active with many community organizations including Uptown Waterloo BIA, Immigration Partnership of Waterloo Region and the KW Oktoberfest Advisory Board.

Regional Chair Redman has served as the Police Services Board Chair since election to the role in January of 2019. She was first elected as Regional Chair of Waterloo Region in 2018 and re-elected in 2022. The Waterloo Regional Police Services Board is a civilian oversight body that governs the Waterloo Regional Police Service. Under the Ontario Police Services Act, the Board is responsible for the provision of adequate and effective police services for local residents.

## Lazaridis School Alumnus Supports Supply Chain Management Research

Wilfrid Laurier University's Centre for Supply Chain Management is renamed the Einwechter Centre for Supply Chain Management in honour of a generous \$1 million donation from alumnus Dan Einwechter (BBA 1977). Housed within the Lazaridis School of Business and Economics, the primary mission of the facility is facilitating and coordinating research.

Laurier president and vice-chancellor Deborah MacLatchy indicated the contribution is a transformational gift and the Einwechter Centre will provide the next generation of researchers and decision makers who will drive business and innovation.

Mr. Einwechter is the chairman and founder of Challenger Motor Freight Inc. which he started as a one-person, one -truck operation. The organization expanded into one of the largest privately owned truckload carriers in Canada, employing more than 2,000 people. Dan is an active member of the Laurier alumni community, volunteering his time for campaigning along with the support of scholarships and athletics.



## **Charcoal Group of Restaurants Completes Major Acquisition**

Kitchener's Charcoal Group of Restaurants recently completed the purchase of Waterloobased Sole Restaurant and Wine Bar, a Cerny Hospitality Group facility that opened in 1999.

Sole will continue with the current team and operate under the new leadership and ownership of the Charcoal Group, which includes Wildcraft, The Bauer Kitchen, as well as 10 Beertown Public House restaurants across southwestern Ontario.

Charcoal Group managing partner Jody Palubiski noted in the Waterloo Region Record (January 19, 2024) they are fortunate to be part of the Sole story and incredibly excited to be working with the team. He is looking forward to learning a lot over the coming months about the business and have some significant plans in store. The agreement follows discussions between the two organizations over the past year.



## University of Waterloo Professor Appointed to Order of Canada

Dr. John Hirdes, a professor in the School of Public Health Sciences at the University of Waterloo, was recently appointed a member of the Order of Canada for his contributions to evidence-based health care practice and policy, notably through the research and development of standardized assessments and decision support tools.

Dr. Hirdes is known for his on-going research focusing on geriatric assessment, mental health, health care and service delivery, and health information management. He earned his BSc, MA and PhD from the University of Waterloo.

Dr. Vivek Goel, president and vice-chancellor of Waterloo noted that Dr. Hirdes has spent his entire career working to make the provision of geriatric services and mental healthcare evidence-informed, more efficient and effective in Canada and around the world. This is a tremendous honour and Dr. Goel is proud that the University of Waterloo continues to be affiliated with individuals who are working to make a difference to our country.



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