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September | October 2023

Prioritizing Infrastructure to Support Population Growth in Waterloo Region





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Investing in Infrastructure for our Fast-Growing Region

Waterloo Region is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada and this trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. This growth is driven by many of the great attributes that our population enjoys: a diverse and dynamic economy with great job opportunities, a world-class post-secondary education sector with UW, Laurier and Conestoga, and the benefit of being a medium-sized city. Personally, I enjoy living in the Region of Waterloo because of the great things it offers as a region of its size, with great restaurants, arts and entertainment, and sports, without the big city issues of traffic, pollution, crime, and high costs of living.

As our Region grows, it will become increasingly important that government continues to invest in our infrastructure to maintain the high standards of living we currently enjoy. If we look back on some of the key infrastructure investments that were made in our Region in the past, we can imagine how different our cities, townships and economy would look if those investments weren't made. The expressway was a major investment that other similar sized municipalities didn't make – and living here we can all see the benefit this investment has made to connecting the municipalities in the Region and giving our people better access to employers, businesses, and educational institutions. Similarly, light rail transit has allowed the Region to build up rather than out, while controlling traffic congestion and pollution. Past investments in our post-secondary and healthcare institutions have enabled our community to grow into what it is today.

This issue of the Advocate focuses on some of the key infrastructure investments that will be needed in our Region to continue to allow it to grow and prosper. These include All Day Two-Way GO Transit, a new Kitchener-Waterloo innovation hospital, Phase 2 of light rail transit in Cambridge, and other improvements to our community. I have taken the GO train to

Toronto on a few occasions, but still rely heavily on driving in and out of the city when I need to go, because the current schedule lacks flexibility and options. I personally look forward to a time when we can take the train to and from Kitchener for an evening event, or to have a weekend in the city, or to return in the morning rather than afternoon. I'm sure others that need to go into Toronto from time to time feel the same.

The Chamber advocates heavily for all these initiatives, not just because they benefit current residents and members, but because they are key investments to allow the Region to grow and meet our full potential. For businesses to attract and retain top talent, the places where people live and work need to be attractive with excellent access to transportation, education, and healthcare while maintaining an affordable cost of living.



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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.

Infrastructure Expansion to Support Economic Growth

As I noted in my May-June 2023 column for the Chamber Advocate, population and economic growth will be significant across Waterloo Region during the next thirty years. The focus will increasingly be centred on planning and building the infrastructure to support unprecedented levels of people and businesses moving into our community.

Our Chamber and local partners will be concentrating our advocacy activities around the delivery of healthcare, transportation, transit and other critical public services to support this growth. Also, the Ontario government has indicated municipal governance reform is a provincial priority and the local business sector will be active in discussions connected to the Region of Waterloo.

Our Chamber has been leading for twenty-five years in the recruitment of family doctors and other healthcare professionals. For many years, our community has experienced on-going shortages. And the local businesses have led to narrow the gap between residents seeking consistent primary care and our practicing physicians. Since 2006, we have maintained a full-time staff position as the issue has become more prominent in relation to business attraction and retention.

A December 2022 report in The Globe and Mail indicated that nearly one in six family doctors across Canada are 65 or older and nearing retirement, leaving millions of Canadians potentially losing access to this critical component of the system. Our local healthcare challenges are also increasing with practitioners departing from the profession as the population increases.

The opening of a medical school in downtown Kitchener has significantly enhanced our physician recruitment efforts, but there is so much more to do-as physicians retire in greater numbers and our population continues to grow. A planned hospital utilizing new and innovative technologies will provide an enhanced environment for both attracting and retaining talent.

Many employers across our community, in partnership with our municipal governments, have maintained an intense interest in improved GO Transit services.

We continue to lead on this front and continue to work with Metrolinx CEO Phil Verster, the provincial government and local politicians like Chair Redman and MPP's Harris and Fife.

The steady progress was slowed by pandemic disruptions that continue to impact transit ridership, but the provincial government remains committed to the announced expansion plans.

In 2011, the Chamber supported Light Rail Transit (LRT) through Kitchener and Waterloo with an additional provision that the system be extended into Cambridge. After an analysis of all available options we determined that LRT was the most appropriate technology for meeting the transit and transportation demands of a growing business sector and population.

At that time, we also requested the release of a detailed plan related to the cost and timing of completion into Cambridge. There was agreement across our organization that since all residents and businesses in the Region of Waterloo are paying for the service then all taxpayers should equally derive the benefits. The Chamber continues to support phase 2 of the transit construction proceeding to ensure that the prior commitment is delivered on for our growing region. Businesses need dependable and reasonable services for the retention of their employees and to sustain the huge population coming to Waterloo Region.

Our community has had one voice asking the government to follow through on the commitment to fully fund and build LRT Phase 2. The Region of Waterloo is a large municipality and should expect this major infrastructure project to be a priority for both the federal and provincial governments.

Local decisions and public investments are urgently required for balanced and efficient growth. All levels of government must allocate the resources to ensure we can meet expanding expectations for a growing population base and economy.



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The Endless Debate Around Municipal Governance Reform

Discussions around municipal governance reform are again prominent on provincial and local agendas. As the Ontario economy recovers from the pandemic with a significant population increase forecasted, senior officials at Queen's Park have commenced and will continue with major changes around the operations and structures of provincial municipalities.

In many areas of Ontario, including Waterloo Region, the history of this debate is extensive and often complex. For impacted stakeholders the reform process, like on-going changes to the education and healthcare systems, is constant and necessary.

The issue of municipal governance reform was not visible during the 2022 provincial campaign and emerged shortly after the Ford administration commenced their second term of government. Contentious and controversial policy debates are often avoided and as former Prime Minister Kim Campbell observed thirty years ago election campaigns are not the time to discuss serious issues.

The first indication of major change was apparent In November of last year when the Better Municipal Governance Act was tabled and subsequently passed. Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clark promised that facilitators would be appointed to examine regional governments in Durham, Halton, Niagara, Peel, York and Waterloo.

A provincial media release noted this legislation would provide decisive action to address the housing crisis by assessing the extension of strong mayor powers and reducing municipal duplication. The proposed facilitators will determine the best mix of roles and responsibilities between upper and lower-tier municipalities across these designated regions and ensure the most effective structures are implemented where required.

The first major signal the Ford administration is pursuing a serious agenda of reform occurred on May 18, 2023, when legislation was tabled to essentially disband the Region of Peel and allow Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon to operate as independent municipalities. A transition board will provide recommendations to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on a range of restructuring matters for dissolution by January 1, 2025. An agreement acceptable to all governments and stakeholders is a significant challenge and the status quo is no longer an option.

No timeline has been provided for facilitators in other Regions however Minister Clark is emphasizing that action is urgently required. The initial response from Waterloo Region elected officials to the series of announcements from Queen's Park is generally cautious. While support for the current system and the

services provided appears stable, a commitment to examining new options is also apparent.

North Dumfries Mayor Sue Foxton, in a May 18, 2023, CBC News report, noted that provincial actions to dissolve Peel Region are specific to circumstances presenting themselves across that municipality. Her township shares the provincial objective to build more homes faster and they look forward to working with an appointed facilitator on moving forward.

Kitchener Mayor Berry Vrbancic, in the same article, noted that a strong local history is prevalent in relation to collaboration between the cities, townships and region. He is also committed to working with the province and local officials on examining options for better municipal government. Woolwich Mayor Sandy Shantz observed that local municipalities have worked together for 50 years, however she will assist the facilitator on identifying potential efficiencies.

Consistent with local municipal officials, our Chamber and the business sector are also committed to working with the provincial government on ensuring cost-effective and efficient service delivery. Employers cannot absorb any additional cost as they emerge from the pandemic and any restructuring initiatives must recognize these challenges.

Numerous media reports have noted that former Region of Waterloo Chair Ken Seiling and Michael Fenn conducted an extensive review of regional municipalities in 2019. However a report delivered to Minister Clark has never been released, which has initiated significant questions around the current review and the capacity of the same minister and government to deliver on commitments for change.

Based on recent announcements related to the Region of Peel, significant reform is occurring and likely to continue. It is the responsibility of all stakeholders – in the public and private sectors – to ensure they participate in this historic process.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Art Sinclair

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

25th Annual Family/Emergency Medicine Resident Weekend Showcases Kitchener-Waterloo

Having access to health care professionals, specifically primary care is critical to the well-being of the residents living in our community. Unfortunately, many families, locally and across the province do not have the benefit of being under the care of a primary care provider. As a result of population growth and retirements, we are in a healthcare crisis, with more residents than ever without a family physician. Though, the current shortage of physicians is an issue nationally, we are facing the impacts of this crisis locally. For a number of reasons, recruiting physicians has become increasingly challenging and we are competing globally to recruit physicians locally.

The objective of the Healthcare & Physician Recruitment Program is to recruit family physicians to Kitchener-Waterloo & Woolwich to meet the primary care needs of residents living and working here. One of our key initiatives is the Annual Family/ Emergency Physician Resident Weekend.

This weekend, held the first weekend in November annually brings first, second and third year family and emergency medicine residents from across Ontario along with their partners, allowing us to showcase Kitchener-Waterloo as a great place to live and work. This weekend is planned, organized and hosted by the dedicated members of the Chamber's Family Physician Liaison Task Force.

This eventful weekend includes touring the family medicine residents through Grand River Hospital and the Medical Centre at The Boardwalk as well as showcasing a couple well known community organizations. Residents will also be introduced to local family physicians and other health care professionals, learning more about the different range of practice opportunities available here in Kitchener-Waterloo.

Emergency medicine residents will be taken on private tours through Grand River Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital. These residents will participate in the rest of the weekend's activities, in hopes of recruiting and retaining new emergency physicians to our hospitals.

Partners/spouses will have the opportunity to explore employment opportunities in their respective fields. Throughout this weekend, our visitors will discover the region's diverse, strong innovative and entrepreneurial spirit.

This weekend has been well received in previous years by the visiting family medicine residents and their partners and it has been our best recruitment tool over the last 24 years. We know from past Resident Weekends that this event is a key driver to the success we have had in recruiting family physicians to our community. Many of the residents that will be participating in this year's weekend will be ready to begin practice in summer 2024-2025.

Our efforts continue throughout the year to recruit new and established family physicians through personal community visits. These tours allow us to explore what the physician is looking for and find a practice opportunity that meets their needs.

Our successes and efforts would not be possible if it wasn't for our generous corporate, municipal and personal sponsors and volunteers of this program. We extend our sincere thanks to our partners for their generous and continued support as we continue to strive to eliminate the physician shortage in Kitchener-Waterloo.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jenna Petker

Jenna is Physician Recruitment Lead for the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce.



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Thank you to our dedicated sponsors for helping the Chamber continue its goal of eliminating the doctor shortage in Waterloo Region.

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Spring-Summer Networking



CEO & President of Waterloo EDC, Tony LaMantia moderates a conversation with the CEO of PWO Canada, Andreas Haas at this year's Manufacturing Summit.



Mike Farwell is at work at our Libro Business After 5, to raise money for his Farwell4Hire fundraising campaign in support of cystic fibrosis.



Guests enjoy lunch catered by Little Mushroom Catering at this year's Energy & Environment Forum at evol1.



Attendees of the 36th Annual Energy & Environment Forum get a tour of the evol1 building, Canada's first zero carbon building.



One of our featured Female Founders, Chloe Hamilton from Warm Embrace Elder Care enjoys breakfast at Crowne Plaza for our Inspiring Women Event Presents, In Conversation with Isabelle Hudon.



The Honorable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario sits down to talk with local leaders in manufacturing at the 2023 Manufacturing Summit.



Attendees hear from Monte McNaughton, Ontario Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training, & Skills Development at Part 2 of the Immigration series.

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Court at Laurelwood Retirement Residence joined us as a Hole Sponsor for the 31st Annual Chamber Golf Scramble in support of KW Healthcare & Physician Recruitment initiatives. Photo Credit: Andrew Garel



News Anchor from CTV News Kitchener, Alexandra Pinto, moderates an intimate fireside chat with Isabelle Hudon, CEO & President of BDC.



Tara Bedard from Immigration Partnership moderates a panel including Massi Basiri from ApplyBoard, Vivek Goel from the University of Waterloo, and Charlene Hofbauer from Workplace Planning Board WR.



Attendees and exhibitors connecting at the 2023 Business Expo.



Guests network at SDG Idea Factory during the Libro Business After 5: Farwell for Hire event.



A full tournament of 144 golfers teed off on August 15th for a great day of networking and camaraderie at Rebel Creek Golf Course. Photo Credit: Andrew Garel

Photo Credits: Tomasz Adamski (excluding golf photos)

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Mark Your Calendar

September 20th

Annual General Meeting (State of the Economy)

3:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Location: Maxwell's Music & Events

Member: complimentary

Future Member: complimentary

Join us as we hear from Scotiabank's Chief Economist, Jean-Francois Perrault on the State of the Economy. Plus, the 2023-2024 Board of Directors will be inducted and hear how your chamber has been performing for you and your business.

Speaker Sponsor:



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September 21st

Libro Business After 5

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Location: Westmount Signs & Printing

Member: complimentary, recommended \$10 donation

Future Member: \$40 donated to our Feature Charity: Oktoberfest Cares

Don't miss our season kick-off of the Business After 5 series and get a first look at the Westmount Signs & Printing new state-of-the-art 21,000 square foot facility. Come out to network with local business professionals and connect with exhibitors all while enjoying some Oktoberfest inspired festivities.

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October 4th

Fireside Chat with Mark Crowell

8:30 am – 10:30 am

Location: Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum / Virtual on HopIn

In-Person (Member): \$45

In-Person (Future Member): \$90

Virtual (Member): \$15

Virtual (Future Member): \$30

Hear from our Chief of Police, Mark Crowell as he discusses the first year in his role with the WRPS and his plans for the future. We'll cover a variety of areas, including some discussion around: advocacy and allyship efforts, reconciliation, talent recruitment, cyber security, community building, and more.

Community Partners:



October 12th

Chamberfest

6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Location: Concordia Club

Member: \$80

Future Member: \$135

Celebrate Oktoberfest at Concordia Club with world-class networking, alongside keg-tapping, schnitzel, and traditional dancing. Each ticket includes a German-style dinner, a drink ticket, and entertainment.

Event Sponsor:



October 23rd

Vine & Dine

6:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Location: Delta Waterloo

Member: \$185

Future Member: \$235

Vine & Dine is an annual event to celebrate our local culinary talent, while raising funds for KW Healthcare & Physician Recruitment initiatives. This year's theme promises to offer a unique and delightful experience by taking popular food truck favourites and transforming them into a fine dining affair. It's a feast you won't want to miss, as local chefs prepare a multicourse menu elevating the delicious street food we love.

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November 23rd

Libro Business After 5: Holiday Edition

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Location: AMJ Campbell

Member: complimentary, recommended \$10 donation to our Feature Charity

Future Member: \$40 donated to our Feature Charity

Close out your year with some great networking opportunities in a festive atmosphere. Connect with local businesses at their booths, enjoy themed drinks and treats, and celebrate the start of the holiday season with other professionals. Holiday attire is encouraged!

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Infrastructure is Everything

Communities are made up of individuals working together to build something better. The same goes for the infrastructure within our towns and cities. These individual systems — roads, sewers, hydro, transit, and others — work together to deliver the critical services we need to live, work, and play.

As Waterloo Region moves towards a projected population of 923,000 residents by 2051, the needs of our community are outgrowing our ability to deliver these services. I couldn't help thinking about this as I attended the inaugural Joy Summit at the recently opened Gaslight District in Cambridge.

The Joy Summit brought together local leaders, changemakers, and community builders to discuss prioritizing joy in city building. You can see joy in design firsthand at the Gaslight District. It's now Waterloo Region's largest public gathering space and the region's largest outdoor video screen. The new district brings retail, art, and living together where you can feel the effort put into every inch of the space.

***the needs of our community are
outgrowing our ability
to deliver these services***

After two days of talks and workshops, my key takeaway was that everything around us was designed — and there is always a better design. Things are designed to be changed, including the processes and policies that exist to bring new infrastructure projects to life.

The processes we used to get to where we are today are not the same processes that will get us to where we're going.

But we can look to things like our community approach to building the ION light rail transit system as an example. Provincial, regional, and municipal governments worked to create a consortium to design, build, and operate the system that has generated more than \$3.5 billion worth of investment in the central transit corridor. It was a unique approach that helped Waterloo Region succeed where other cities have fallen short (sorry, Ottawa).

Today, the challenge that needs a new approach is housing. In a 2022 report from the Smart Prosperity Institute at the University of Ottawa, our community will need an estimated 70,800 new homes by 2031 to address our population growth and the existing shortage we already have.

It's not only new homes that we're lacking — there is also a shortage of affordable apartments. In a recent article in The

Record, data showed that Waterloo Region residents need to earn \$28 an hour working 40 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.

The traditional approaches to building new housing aren't working anymore. All the approvals, zoning, and everything else that gets new projects delayed at city hall must be rethought. Tackling the housing infrastructure crisis in Waterloo Region and across Canada needs a new solution.

That's what inspired HIP Development, Habitat for Humanity, the Grand Valley Construction Association, and other groups to start BUILD NOW: Waterloo Region. On July 20, the new organization announced its launch and plan to build 10,000 new affordable and attainable homes in seven years.

***There are two roadblocks locally
in changing the way we approach
infrastructure changes.***

HIP Developments president Scott Higgins told the crowd that local developers realized that while they were part of the problem driving out-of-reach housing prices, they could also be part of the solution.

We need this same approach in taking action with all our infrastructure projects. Whether that's expanding transit or building livable cities that prioritize walking and cycling in addition to making sure we can drive to where we need to go.

There are two roadblocks locally in changing the way we approach infrastructure changes. First, we're being too reactive to the community's needs instead of addressing them as they're identified. One reason is that our municipal budgets are restricted based on this fictitious idea that we need to keep taxes low, otherwise people won't vote for elected leaders in the future. By doing this, we're pushing our current problems down the road to future generations.

Saying mowing the lawn is "tomorrow's problem" is one thing. Saying building affordable housing is "tomorrow's problem" does not work.

The other challenge is the potential of reform in regional government. No one knows what the change will be or when it will come, but the idea of it is being used to put off needed changes. We can't delay critical infrastructure projects and process changes until we know what the new structure will be. We must be flexible and innovative today to build the infrastructure we need tomorrow.

Talent is another issue affecting infrastructure across Waterloo Region. Last month, the federal government's new program to attract H1B visa holders from the U.S. generated 10,000 applications in under 48 hours. We need this talent and other workers to drive our manufacturing, agricultural, tech, and other industries — but where are they going to live?

***We also need to look at changing
how we build.***

Building the infrastructure we need tomorrow takes skilled trades people, but they're a group we are struggling to hire and retain. Labour Minister Monte McNaughton recently said Ontario needs 72,000 new workers by 2027 to compensate for the gap created by skilled trades people retiring. That's not to mention the thousands of new skilled trades people we need to meet our residential, commercial, and industrial needs.

Brenda Gilmore and Rosie Hessian are changing the approach to how we train and hire skilled trades people with the Jill of All Trades program at Conestoga College. Women only make up 4% of skilled trades people today. The innovative Jill of All Trades program brings hundreds of young women together with construction and trades leaders to see the potential of a career in a skilled trade.

We also need to look at changing how we build. There are innovative products in HVAC, systems controls, and construction processes — but consumer wariness and supply chain concerns often keep us from adopting them. We keep going back to the tried and true because we know we can manage it.

But looking at projects like *evolv1* and the upcoming Bright Building, we can see that new technologies can generate profits while building something better at the same time. Located in the David Johnston Research & Technology Park, *evolv1* is the first zero-carbon building in Canada. The nearly complete Bright Building on King Street in Kitchener is the first multi-tenant building in the region to be completely electric.

If we know one thing in Waterloo Region, it's how to disrupt an industry and do something new. Disruption is designing differently and doing it with our future needs in mind. Let's not let what today looks like dictate what Waterloo Region will look like tomorrow.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jeff MacIntyre

Jeff MacIntyre is the president of the Grand Valley Construction Association. He is a community builder with decades of experience supporting businesses with a focus on continued growth through innovation. He has held leadership roles in the private and nonprofit sectors.

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The Growing Need for Connected Regional Transit

The success of the Toronto-Waterloo corridor has long been something for Canadians to be proud of. Outside of Silicon Valley, this area represents the largest tech cluster on the planet¹, brimming with startups, research labs, incubators, large-scale tech businesses, and world-renowned universities.

While the Innovation Corridor has been growing for more than 35 years, Google Waterloo's story began in 2005, with the opening of our first engineering hub in Canada. What started with four employees has grown to thousands of world-class engineers, working on products that billions of people use every day.

In our Toronto office, our global business organizations including ads, sales and marketing teams work to support Canadian businesses and the economy. Google employees travel through the corridor daily, to meet with teammates and customers, attend events, and to engage in the communities where they live and work.

We love being anchored on both ends of this incredible, thriving tech ecosystem, but one piece that remains elusive in achieving its full potential is efficient and convenient public transit between Waterloo Region and Toronto.

The current train service is few and far between, leaving both workers and residents to rely on cars and buses, forcing more vehicles on the road, clogging major highways, and adding to the carbon footprint of our communities.

The Province's proposal of an all day, two-way GO train service in 2013 was the solution we needed. But a decade later, the timeline for this critical infrastructure project remains unclear.

Meanwhile, the need for this service has only amplified. Census data shows that more Ontarians are choosing Kitchener-Waterloo, making it one of the fastest growing communities in the country.² During the pandemic, we saw increased migration away from

major urban centers to other parts of the province. But now, with increased adoption of hybrid work, and more people returning to the office, seamless mobility of workers across the corridor has never been more necessary.

This also rings true for the over 400,000 students enrolled in the 16 post-secondary institutions across the Toronto-Waterloo corridor, including Canada's largest engineering schools, with prominent computer science programs. The next generation of tech talent are seizing opportunities and are traveling through the corridor for classes, internships and co-op programs daily.

It's inspiring to see the talent and energy bustling within our tech communities. But we need greater investments in our public transit services to sustain this momentum. This will no doubt have a lasting impact on our economy, our communities, and on the quality-of-life for those within them.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jen Smith

*Engineering Director, Google Labs;
Co-Site Lead, Google Waterloo*

Jennifer is an engaging executive with deep expertise in bringing technology products and services to market. Her career spans technologies from satellites to laser projectors to AdTech software and markets from entertainment to military. She builds

high-performing teams in rapidly changing environments and is a passionate advocate for women in STEM.

¹<https://www.waterlooeedc.ca/blog/what-is-toronto-waterloo-corridor>

²<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210114/cg-a001-eng.htm>

2023 Election of Directors Nominating Committee's Slate of Candidates Nominee Profiles



Everton Wilmot, President Wilmot Technologies

Everton is President of Wilmot Technologies, a leading technology consulting company in the Region of Waterloo, with expertise in IT infrastructure in both commercial and retail sectors. His entrepreneurial drive has seen the successful development and growth of multiple start-up companies that have had an impact on the economic development of Waterloo Region. Since coming to Canada at the age of four, Everton has resided in Kitchener. As a soccer, hockey, and basketball coach, he has always found ways to support the community. A current member of the Kitchener Westmount Rotary club, a director on the Drayton Entertainment and Unwrap Theatre board of directors, he continues to make time for organizations that can benefit from his experiences. He is also an arts and culture enthusiast, with a passion for the development and advancement of youth.



Chloe Hamilton, Founder of Warm Embrace Elder Care Ltd.

Chloe is an entrepreneur and local business owner who founded Warm Embrace Elder Care in 2007. She continues to manage and grow the business, ensuring that local elderly residents receive the care they deserve.

Chloe believes strongly in volunteering and is a passionate community member. She has served on numerous committees and councils. Most notably, she chaired the Elder Abuse Prevention Council of Waterloo Region from 2015 to 2022, during a time of transition with strategic planning and rebranding, as well as navigating the challenges of volunteer engagement during the pandemic.

As an active business owner for over 16 years, Chloe is abundantly aware of the needs and challenges faced by small businesses, and the important role the Chamber plays in their success. She mentors other small business owners and is excited about the growth and development of the Region's startups.



Christopher M. Andree, Partner Gowling WLG

Christopher M. Andree is a partner in Gowling WLG's Waterloo Region office. He is a former National Practice Group Leader – Employment and Labour Law, and former Advocacy Department Leader. Chris focuses his practice in the area of employment law and represents employers in all aspects of their relationships with their employees. He advises both owner-managed businesses and multinational organizations in many sectors at the heart of the Waterloo Region economy, including technology, manufacturing, financial services, retail, food, beverage and recreation, and transportation. Chris represents clients before courts and administrative tribunals, as well as in the context of the financing and sale of businesses.

Chris has held many volunteer positions including as a Director of Chicopee Ski and Summer Resort, Member of the Board of the Conestoga College Annual Golf Tournament, and Member of the United Way Campaign Cabinet. He has also coached local children's sports teams.

With his wife Leanne and their three children, Chris has lived in Waterloo Region for more than 15 years.

Geraldine Stafford, Manager of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion with the Waterloo Regional Police Service

As the first civilian Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Manager at Waterloo Regional Police Services, Geraldine Stafford is used to blazing trails, literally. A native of Kitchener, she first made her mark in the region as a standout student and track athlete, attending (the then all-girls school) St. Mary's High School. She spent the past 30 years living outside the Region having an accomplished career working for City of Brampton, The Ministry of the Attorney General, and most recently Bell Canada. As an entrepreneur, Geraldine founded her own record suspension (criminal pardon) business and for the past 20 years has worked with young people, facilitating applications to set aside their criminal record. Specializing in equity, social and criminal justice, Geraldine has assisted young people get a fresh start in life and has facilitated and tailored workshops and pro-bono clinics to educate young people about their rights within the legal and criminal justice system.

Empowerment of young people is her passion, particularly young women, where she has coached girls travel basketball for over 10 years, offering her unique mentorship opportunities in terms of leveraging sport to finance education, finding one's own passion and strategies for bringing forth your whole and authentic self whether to social or professional settings.

A sought-after speaker, in 2022, she was named as one of the Top 100 Black Women to Watch in Canada for her dedication in promoting diversity and inclusion for all. Geraldine is an accomplished professional who brings stories of resilience, hope and making it against all odds, where her mandate for every speaking engagement is to inform, inspire, surprise and delight.



Mohsan Abdullah, CEO & Co-Founder, Token Creative Services

Mohsan is a serial entrepreneur with deep roots in the community and a core value of connecting people by creating thriving environments. He is a strong team player with a collaborative approach specializing in marketing and media services. Being a co-founder and CEO of Token Creative Services since 2014 has given him the opportunity to connect with a variety of community members in the Waterloo Region.

As a member of the chamber since 2016, voted volunteer of the year in 2020, Mohsan has been part of multiple committees. He has been a BEA Gala Judge, as well as part of the Marketing Advisory Board. He is currently on the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee, has facilitated the Marketing P2P event, was Chair for the CYP, and served as a mentor for multiple other community events. He has been a board member for Oktoberfest for the past two years and is currently working with Activa as a Sales Specialist selling new construction homes and spreading awareness in the community regarding the importance of Net Zero homes in providing a greener future for the next generation — especially his two children..





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New Hospital Critical to Community's Growth

Grand River Hospital and St. Mary's General Hospital are making meaningful progress on our joint project to strengthen health care delivery across Waterloo Region and enable our community to continue to thrive.

Our economy is flourishing. Our population is growing at a remarkable pace. Nearly one million people are expected to live in our region in the next three decades. It's a significant challenge for our aging, outdated hospital buildings to keep up with demand and deliver the world-class care our patients deserve.

But together, as hospitals and as a community, we are up for the challenge.

We are partnering on an ambitious plan to build a new state-of-the-art hospital, renew and repurpose the midtown Kitchener-Waterloo Campus into an ambulatory and urgent care centre, and expand the Freeport Campus in Kitchener to increase our rehabilitation capacity. Grand River Hospital and St. Mary's General Hospital will deliver services across all three sites, together.

We have an opportunity to build a truly innovative hospital that reflects our community's standing as Canada's largest technology innovation hub. If we want to continue to be a hotbed for major international employers, we need to be able to deliver on the health care promise that Canada provides.

With our business community's strong support, we will create a bright and healthy future for Waterloo Region.

We are already making great headway. Among recent milestones, we've begun the process to find a location for the new acute care hospital. Featuring nearly 1,000 beds, the hospital will be the future home of our regional cancer, cardiac, eye care and renal programs. It will provide patients access to emergency services, obstetrics, pediatrics, neurology, trauma, surgery and other regional services. Our incredible teams at Grand River Hospital and St. Mary's General Hospital will work side by side together to deliver exceptional care.

We have begun the important task of determining where to locate the new hospital. We have assembled a five-member

Site Selection Panel of skilled professionals, including long-time community leaders with deep roots in Waterloo Region, to lead the process.

A project steering committee of the hospitals' boards – the Building the Future of Care Together (BFCT) Committee – is overseeing the site selection project and the Panel. This steering committee reports into the boards of both Grand River and St. Mary's Hospital as well as St. Joseph's Health System. In all, more than 30 local community leaders are involved in the decision-making process, including site selection criteria and, ultimately, a decision on a preferred site for the new hospital.

But our communities – our patients, community members, municipal partners and business leaders – also have a significant voice in the process.

Over the summer we hosted focus groups and launched a public survey to receive input on what is important when identifying a location for the new hospital. A groundswell of excitement is building for this project. We've received thousands of survey responses and have seen active participation in our focus groups.

The signs of support we've received this summer stretch beyond our region's borders all the way to Ontario's government. During a recent announcement in Ayr, Ontario Premier Doug Ford referenced the importance of three major infrastructure projects for Waterloo Region, including the completion of a new hospital.

It was encouraging to hear the Premier underscore the need to build a new hospital to care for our growing population. But we need to continue to ramp up support and advocacy across our community to ensure our proposal remains a top priority for the provincial government. We need to leverage the same spirit of support our community has demonstrated on projects such as the Two-Way All-Day GO campaign.

A new innovation hospital is the next legacy infrastructure project that will help Waterloo Region continue to grow and prosper. Your support is critically important as we continue to build a case for the project. To get involved, please visit <https://futureofcaretogether.ca>.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Fam

Mark Fam is President of St. Mary's General Hospital



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ron Gagnon

Ron Gagnon is the CEO and President of Grand River Hospital

COLLABORATION IS KEY TO REDUCING CANADA'S EMISSIONS

A perspective from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP)

Canadians are concerned about climate change and Canada's oil and natural gas industry shares the view that reducing emissions is good for society and the planet. As an industry, oil and natural gas producers stand ready to work shoulder-to-shoulder with the federal and provincial governments to achieve emissions reduction goals.

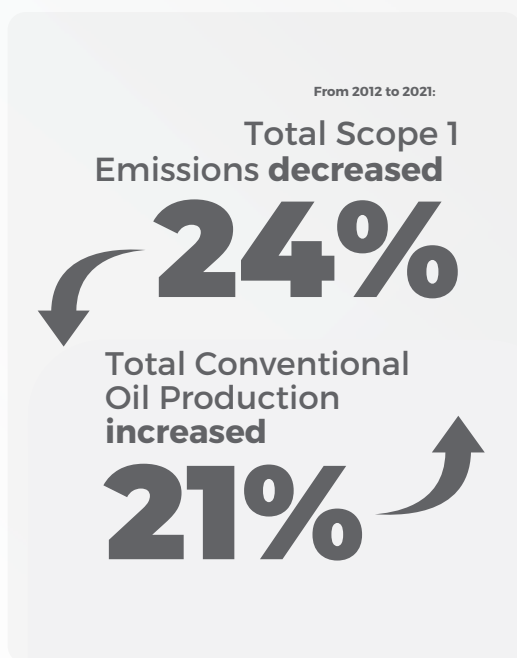


The upstream industry is a constructive, solutions-oriented partner in addressing emissions reduction.

The upstream industry is a constructive, solutions-oriented partner in addressing emissions reduction. Canada is already a global leader in emissions-reducing innovations and technologies and as significant investors in clean technology, Canadian energy producers are an important part of that leadership.

Creativity + collaboration = lower emissions

Natural gas and oil producers have a long tradition of finding creative ways to address environmental issues including emissions. With the help of innovators across the country, including here in Ontario, oil and natural gas producers have been developing carbon-lowering processes and technologies with positive results: since 2012, conventional (non-oil sands) producers have driven down direct emissions by 24% while growing total production by 21%.



Since 2012, conventional producers have driven down direct emissions by 24% while growing total production by 21%.

From region to region, the conventional side of the industry is extremely varied and complex. While that complexity raises some issues, it also presents opportunities for constructive collaboration and synergies.

For example, electrification of drilling, production, and processing (replacing equipment such as pumps and valves fuelled by diesel or natural gas with electrical equipment) presents significant opportunities to reduce emissions, especially when that electricity is derived from hydro or renewable sources. But oil and natural gas producers depend on electrical utilities to 'green' their grids and build transmission and distribution lines close to oil and natural gas fields and facilities. This is a clear opportunity for co-operation between industries.

Canada's energy producers are eager to collaborate across industries, even beyond supply chain and innovative technologies. Delivering emission reductions must be a focus for the entire Canadian economy. Different industries have unique opportunities to reduce emissions that allow them to move faster or slower depending on cost and technology.

Ongoing environmental performance improvement has always been critical to maintaining a responsible, vibrant and competitive energy sector. Canada's oil and natural gas industry can help provide global energy security, while finding solutions for a low-carbon future through innovation.

About CAPP

CAPP is the trusted voice for companies large and small, that explore for, develop and produce natural gas and oil throughout Canada. CAPP's member companies produce about 80 per cent of Canada's natural gas and oil. CAPP's associate members provide a wide range of services that support the upstream oil and natural gas industry. CAPP supports industry efforts to continue reducing emissions and to support Indigenous participation and prosperity. As a non-partisan organization, CAPP works with all governments and all parties





EXCITING TRAVEL DESTINATIONS!

A scenic view of a tropical beach in Thailand. A traditional wooden longtail boat is beached on the sand. The water is a vibrant turquoise, and a large, lush green limestone karst island rises from the sea in the background under a clear blue sky.

THAILAND

A large, historic stone castle with multiple towers and battlements, surrounded by lush green trees and a well-manicured lawn.

IRELAND

A section of the Great Wall of China, featuring stone battlements and watchtowers, winding along a ridge covered in green vegetation.

CHINA

A view of the Prague skyline, showing a dense cluster of red-roofed buildings and a bridge over a river in the foreground.

PRAGUE

A busy street scene in Vienna, featuring historic European architecture, people walking, and a horse-drawn carriage.

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DO I HAVE TO DISCLOSE MY MEDICINAL CANNABIS USE TO MY BOSS?



Employees often wonder if they must disclose their medicinal cannabis use to their employers. Some may worry about employer judgment, while others may believe all medication usage should be private. The short answer is...it's tricky.

While there is no official overarching legal requirement that employees disclose their use of medicinal cannabis to their employers, they do have a duty to report hazards in the workplace under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

On the other side, although employers have a duty to accommodate workers* who consume medicinal cannabis under the *Human Rights Code*, they are also legally obligated to keep their employees safe under the OHSA.

This includes situations where impairment induced by employees' medication may endanger their safety, the safety of their co-workers, or others - mainly when being fit for duty is an occupational requirement.

For example, Jessie uses medicinal cannabis every day. They work at a clothing retail shop, where they interact with customers but have no interaction with dangerous machinery. Jessie does not need to disclose their medicinal cannabis use under OHSA.

Whereas Jayden uses medicinal cannabis periodically and works on the factory floor of a manufacturing company. They do need to disclose their medicinal cannabis because, due to the nature of their work, their use of cannabis could reasonably be expected to create a hazard to their co-workers.

Based on the parameters above, while employees and employers have duties to each other under the OHSA, it is ultimately up to the employee to decide whether or not they tell their employer about their medicinal cannabis usage from a safety and accommodation perspective. Although, failure to disclose the use of medicinal cannabis where required may be grounds for disciplining the employee.

**If an employee needs an accommodation to use medicinal cannabis, they must first request it - a lack of awareness of a disability and corresponding need to consume medical cannabis may relieve an employer of any duty to accommodate.*

Contact us today for advice on everything from corporate governance to incorporation and trademark protection.

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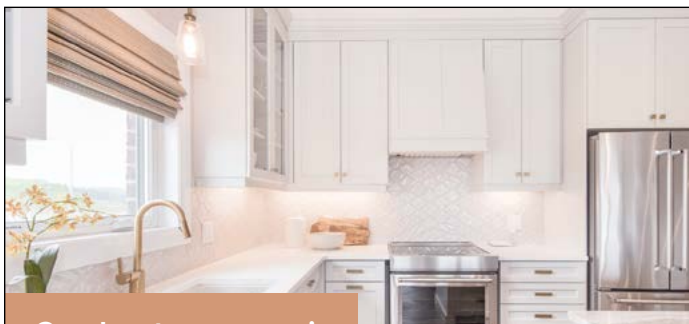


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Member Notables



Ellen Graf-Martin Inducted into 2023 Canadian Marketing Hall of Fame

Ellen Graf-Martin, Founder and President of Graf-Martin Communications, was inducted into the 2023 Canada Marketing, Advertising, PR and Communication Hall of Fame presented by Marketing News Canada. The announcement was made on June 8, 2023, at the Social West Marketing Conference in Calgary, Alberta.

The Marketing, Advertising, PR and Communication Hall of Fame is one of the Canadian industry's most prestigious awards. Marketing News Canada recognizes individuals who have played a meaningful, longstanding (10+ years) role in contributing to one or various businesses' success. Inductees have also led a career that's involved breakthroughs, firsts and contributions to the marketing, advertising, PR and communications industry.



Rocco Rossi Announces Departure from Ontario Chamber of Commerce

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) formally announced that Rocco Rossi will step down from the role of President and CEO effective January 2024 following six remarkable years of advancing the goals and objectives of the organization.

An OCC media release from July 5, 2023, noted that Rossi's dynamic approach, unwavering enthusiasm, and ability to drive impactful initiatives have significantly contributed to the organization's success. He bolstered the Ontario chamber network, forged strong relationships with government bodies, and led the team producing influential policy and advocacy work while developing impactful programs and services.

An executive search team has been formed, and Odgers Berndtson will initiate a comprehensive process to identify a suitable successor to lead the organization, advance the interest of its members, and drive competitiveness and economic growth in the province.



New President and Chief Executive Officer at Toronto Region Board of Trade

On May 3, 2023, Yung Wu, Chair of the Toronto Region Board of Trade, formally announced that Jan De Silva will step down as President & Chief Executive Officer effective August 31, 2023.

Ms. De Silva has been with the organization for eight and a half impactful and dynamic years. Giles Gherson, currently Toronto Region Board of Trade's Executive Vice President and Chair of the Economic Blueprint Institute, will be appointed the next President & Chief Executive Officer effective September 1, 2023. Jan will remain at the organization as an advisor until the end of this year, working closely with the Executive Leadership Team to ensure a smooth transition.

The Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce extends our best wishes to Ms. De Silva on her future endeavours and recognizes many significant efforts to expand GO train services into Waterloo Region.

Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest Appoints New Executive Director

Tracy Van Kalsbeek has been appointed as the new Executive Director of Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest, replacing the retiring Alfred Lowrick.

Board President Allan Cayenne noted Ms. Van Kalsbeek brings a wealth of knowledge and experience that will allow her to move Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest forward. Her love for and connection with the community is a great fit and ties well to the values of the festival.

She joins Oktoberfest after five years at the Uptown Waterloo Business Improvement Area (BIA), guiding businesses through challenging times including construction, pandemic planning and economic recovery. A May 30, 2023, Waterloo Region Record article indicates she has many ideas for taking the festival to the next level.



New President at Enova

On June 27, 2023, the Board of Directors of Enova Power Corp. and Enova Energy Corporation formally announced the appointment of Greig Cameron as the new President and Chief Executive Officer of the Enova Group of Companies effective July 17, 2023. Greig replaces Co-CEOs Rene Gatien and Jerry Van Ooteghem who retired after long careers with Enova's legacy utilities Waterloo North Hydro Inc. (WNH) and Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro Inc. (KWH) respectively.

Greig was previously Vice President of Innovation and Business Transformation at Enova with overall responsibility for the organization's people and culture, innovation, business development, post-merger integration, corporate communications, and meter-to-cash operations. He was also Vice President of Engineering and Information Technology at Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro.

Mr. Cameron is a Professional Engineer with over 25 years of progressive leadership experience across the electric utility sector. He holds a Master of Engineering degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering, a Master of Science in Management Information Systems, and a Masters Certificate in Energy Sector Leadership.



Lisa Drew Retiring from CityNews 570

On Friday, July 28, 2023, Lisa Drew anchored her final morning newscast before retiring from broadcasting.

She joined the news and traffic team at 570 CHYM in 1990 and became morning co-anchor with Glenn Pelletier in 2004 when the station switched formats. Lisa guided the morning team to three national Edward R. Murrow Awards for excellence in broadcasting during 2004, 2007 and 2020.

Lisa has been recognized by multiple organizations across Waterloo Region accompanying the Arnold Devlin Community Award for Media from the Ontario Association for Suicide Prevention for her series "Hope and Help" to raise awareness around teen suicide. In 2014, she received a YWCA Women of Distinction Award from the YWCA Cambridge.



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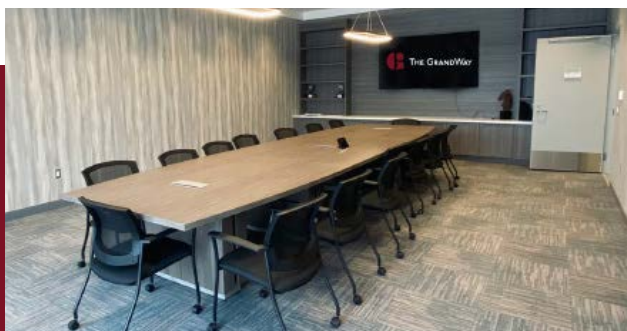
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