



**Marriott Downtown at CF Toronto Eaton Centre
VIRTUAL PROGRAM**

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

- 8:15 a.m. EDCO 2021 Annual General Meeting *(EDCO Members Only)*
- 9:00 a.m. Conference Opening and Welcome
- 9:10 a.m. Traditional Blessing and Land Acknowledgement: Carolyn King, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation
- 9:30 a.m. **Opening Keynote Presentation:** Kevin Rempel - 2013 World Champion and 2014 Sochi Paralympic bronze medalist in sledge hockey
Kevin has surmounted incredible life challenges to reach the Olympic podium and now to bring his powerful message of hope and resilience. Challenge yourself to adopt *The Hero Mindset* to drive results and embrace change!
Presented by



- 10:30 a.m. Health Break & Coffee
Presented by



11:15 a.m.

Leveraging Data-Driven Community Economic Development to Rebuild Ontario's Main Streets

The pandemic has highlighted the existing challenges main streets have been facing, but it has also helped residents rediscover the importance of their local main streets and the small businesses that call them home. To assist in the rediscovery and rebuilding of Ontario's main streets, and with the support of the Government of Canada through the [Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario](#) (FedDev Ontario) My Main Street was created and launched. This program focuses on promoting data-driven inclusive community economic development and reimagining the use of public spaces to draw residents back to their main streets. Learn more about My Main Street and how communities can leverage deep data analysis and community engagement to rebuild their main streets with strategic investments in placemaking and business attraction and expansion.

About My Main Street

My Main Street is focused on data-driven community economic development and placemaking investments to support healthy and sustainable main street communities across southern Ontario. This project is the result of a \$23.25-million Government of Canada investment delivered by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario to provide targeted support for economic recovery in the region. The Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) and the Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) have partnered to deliver My Main Street through two program streams. Learn more at www.mymainstreet.ca.

Opening Remarks, Greetings: Ruby Sahota, Member of Parliament, Brampton North, on behalf of The Honourable Helena Jaczek, Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario

Presenters:

- Mary Rowe, Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Urban Institute
- Omer Ismael, Program Manager, My Main Street Ambassadors
- Joani Gerber, Chief Executive Officer, Invest in Stratford

12:15 p.m.

Lunch

1:45 p.m.

Concurrent Workshops

Yes, Real Estate is Still King!

In response to the pandemic and the resultant almost wholesale pivot to alternative work arrangements, real questions were raised as to what the implications were for hard assets in a virtual world. With shifts to Work-from-home, online shopping, curbside pick-up/delivery, etc, the risk was that our current system, which is predicated on the movement of people and the mantra of location, location, location, would become obsolete with devastating impacts on residential, commercial and industrial markets.

However, this has not been the case. Instead, real estate demand in residential and industrial markets has soared with commercial and office markets also primed to return to their former glory and more. In many markets, business openings have exceeded closures for some time and even large urban cores are cool again as evidenced by Toronto being selected as one of the top cities globally to Work-from-home.

Rural and smaller urban areas near and far have benefit significantly from some aspects of the pandemic with many experiencing record growth in their housing markets and increased commercial interest. For larger cities, the “flight to rural areas” hasn’t been as pronounced as expected and activity is recovering. However, more rural areas are now struggling with growth that may be higher than they expected and urban cores have yet to see the full recovery of their office markets.

This session is a follow-up from the 2021 “Is Real Estate Still King” session and will explore updated data and trends that will shape our communities in the coming year.

Moderator: Rajbir Sian, Senior Economic Development Officer, Town of Oakville

Presenters:

- Brent Fisher, Manager of Community Development & Marketing, City of Owen Sound
- Ted Davis, Managing Director, Avison Young

Innovative opportunities to improve municipal operations and reduce utility bills, while enhancing electric grid reliability

Ontario’s businesses and communities are looking at innovative ways to use electricity more efficiently, supplying more of their own energy needs, and moving towards electrification. More and more communities are adopting solar panels, energy storage, demand management tools, among other solutions. These changes are contributing to economic development, providing businesses with new sources of revenue, and helping communities achieve their sustainability goals.

As Ontario’s Independent Electricity System Operator, it is our job to integrate all of these changes and ensure that electricity remains reliable and affordable for years to come.

Innovative projects funded over the past several years through the IESO’s Grid Innovation Fund have provided valuable learnings economic developers can leverage to provide benefits to their communities, reduce municipal utility bills, and enhance electric grid reliability.

This session will provide an overview of Ontario’s changing electricity grid, with a panel featuring local community representatives discussing their own innovative energy projects and what it means for their communities.

Moderator: Katherine Sparkes, Director of Innovation Research and Development at the IESO

Presenters:

- Lee Hodgkinson, Head of Sustainability and Technical Services, DREAM
- Dragos Paraschiv, P.Eng., Principal, Exergy Associates Ltd
- Tom Vair, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Community Development and Enterprise Services, City of Sault Ste. Marie

Presented by



The Remarkable Transformation of Communities with Little Hope of Success

Explore the journey of two similar, yet contrasting, communities who found themselves in the face of economic crisis. While Scarborough and Kitchener took unique paths in response, both are now

experiencing unprecedented economic growth. Learn how Scarborough's community-driven approach and Kitchener's government-enabled approach were founded on similar principles of community engagement, partnerships, risk-taking and innovation.

Attend this session and learn:

Perseverance - No matter how challenged you think you are in your community, anything is possible

Innovation – Innovative ways to identify and use your resources, no matter the resource basket available

Collaboration - learn how build relationships and sustain them and inspire your stakeholders and volunteers to become active partners working together toward a common goal.

Moderator: Brock Dickinson, Adjunct Professor & Entrepreneur in Residence, University of Waterloo

Presenters:

- Dave Hardy, Hardy Stevenson and Associates Limited
- Cory Bluhm, City of Kitchener

2:45 p.m. Health Break & Coffee

3:30 p.m. **Concurrent Workshops**

COVID - The Game Changer - Supporting Main Street Ontario in a Post-COVID World

March 2020, Ontario's main streets became ghost towns, the streets were bare of people, businesses and cars. Business Improvement Areas across the province stayed "on the street", working on taskforces, guiding businesses and creating vibrancy where barely a whisper was heard. Finally, there was and is true recognition on what "Shop Local" truly means - it means human interaction, the personal touch and capital "C" Community. Partnerships were formed overnight from groups that had been siloed before and the ghostly images began to take human form as we began the work of bringing people back to our main streets. This session will focus on how these partnerships brought people together and how we need to keep working together and focus on our main street communities.

Moderator: Belinda Wick-Graham, Director Economic & Community Development, Town of Minto

Presenters:

- Kay Matthews, Executive Director, Ontario BIA Association
- Judy Morgan, 360 Collective – Retail Analysts and Main Street Strategists
- John Archer, 360 Collective – Retail Analysts and Main Street Strategists

The Town of Lincoln and Civiconnect - Youth Skills Studio

Looking for an analysis of the current research on youth workforce development challenges facing Ontario including skills gaps and low youth retention? This session discusses the current workforce readiness initiatives in place for youth across the province and critically evaluates why many of these initiatives are not yielding substantive results.

Learn about the Youth Skills Studio, an innovative and collaborative approach to youth workforce readiness developed by the Town of Lincoln and Civiconnect that operationalizes work-integrated learning, skills training, and digital technology to benefit both youth and local SMEs.

Presenters:

- Paul Di Ianni, Director of Economic Development and Communications, Town of Lincoln
- Kailene Jackson, Co-founder and Executive Director, Civiconnect
- Cameron Rotz, Economic Development Assistant, Town of Lincoln

Presented by



Moving on to renewable thermal energy: the business case for geo-exchange

Responding to climate change will require a meaningful shift in our economy, leaving a significant opportunity for economic development and job creation in low-carbon industries. Municipalities that are well-positioned to support growth in these industries stand to grow at an unprecedented rate. Furthermore, as the cost of carbon continues to increase, municipalities that can offer efficient and low-carbon energy systems are likely to attract development over those with more carbon-intensive options. As we collectively move on and re-imagine Ontario's economy, it'll be critical that we secure sustainable, equitable & local energy to do so.

Join Geosource Energy in this session, where you'll learn more about:

- geo-exchange technology – what it is, how it works and why it's such a great investment;
- how another municipality has leveraged this technology to meet their goals; and
- what steps your municipality can take to start building geo-exchange into your economic development strategies.

Presenters:

- Darynne Hagen, EIT, Development Manager, Geosource Energy
- Dave Cano, B.E.Sc., M.Sc., MEB, CEM, PMP, LEED, Green Associate, Energy Solutions Manager, Town of Oakville

Presented by



Trust the Process! A Design Thinking Approach to Collaboration for Enhanced Tourism & Economic Development Outcomes

How can a design thinking-based approach to collaboration be an effective tool for supporting better tourism and economic development outcomes? This approach has been modeled this year with two rural Ontario municipalities for cycling tourism projects. This session combines lessons learned from a case study with Haldimand County and an interactive exercise to demonstrate how a facilitated, collaborative process based in design thinking can bring together stakeholders who might not normally collaborate as part of a tourism development process. The end result is better integration of various end users' needs and experiences, which contributes to more thoughtful and effective tourism and economic development outcomes.

Moderator: Sean Dyke, Chief Executive Officer, St. Thomas Economic Development Corporation

Presenters:

- Chris Chen, Executive Director of Asset Management Ontario, AMONTario
- Jennifer Court, Executive Director, Green Infrastructure Ontario
- Jaymie Nelson, Senior Economic Development Officer, Haldimand County

4:30 p.m.

Program ends for the day

Thursday, April 7, 2022

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8:30 a.m.

**Early Bird: The most important element of your economic development website
(Grand Ballroom)**

During this fast moving and engaging session, economic developers will learn what it takes to stand out from the crowd and what they need to prioritize when promoting their location to site selectors, businesses and remote workers. The session will also cover:

1. Why economic developers should begin with WHY
2. How to create a compelling "Why US" section in your website
3. Best practice examples in Ontario and other locations.

Presenter: Lee Anderson, Vice-President, Customer Success, Localintel

Presented by



9:00 a.m.

Conference Opening and Welcome

9:15 a.m.

Plenary Presentation: From DEI to Investment Attraction

This session is hosted by EDCO's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. In this panel discussion, you will hear from economic developers about the impact of diversity, equity and inclusion programs and policies on our investment attraction work and our communities' identities and growth. We will discuss practices and initiatives used to promote inclusion, diversity and racial equity through two case studies and identify the challenges to strengthening DEI in our communities. The panel brings perspectives from the private and public sector and shares effective inclusive growth strategies affecting the community, local government, and the business community. Attendees will learn of tools to attract and encourage DEI entrepreneurs.

Presenters:

- Nour Mazloun, Communications & Events Officer, Kingston Economic Development Corporation
- Tammy Hwang, Business Development Officer, Global Hamilton
- Glen Loo, Senior Advisor, Special Projects, Impact & Main

10:15 a.m.

Flash Talk: Nobody Needs Another Damn Mug! Rethinking Promotional Materials in Economic Development

Giving a few case studies, Brayden will ask/implore that the economic developers stop wasting money on mugs, coffee tumblers and umbrellas, but instead shift to investing in gift cards to local retail, restaurants and breweries. Talk about the outcomes from that as opposed to gift cards.

Presenter: Brayden Siersma, Town of Whitby

10:30 a.m.

Health Break & Coffee

11:00 a.m.

FDI Trends in Ontario and Canada

Sponsored by ResearchFDI, a leading investment attraction consultancy, this session will provide a comprehensive analysis of the foreign direct investment (FDI) trends in Canada and Ontario. These projections and trends will inform economic developers' investment attraction strategies for 2022 and beyond. In addition, our team will provide concrete recommendations and insights on how to build out and/or update an existing investment attraction strategy.

Moderator: Sean Dyke, Chief Executive Officer, St. Thomas Economic Development Corporation

Presenters:

- Bruce Takefman, President & Chief Executive Officer, ResearchFDI
- Stefan Calimanu, Vice-President, Trade and Export Services, ResearchFDI

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Labour Mobility Pathway for Refugees

Talent Beyond Boundaries is the only organization in the world connecting refugees with international job opportunities, opening labour mobility as a complementary solution to traditional refugee resettlement. This session will benefit employers who are seeking to hire skilled workforce.

Presenters:

- Lara Dyer, Canada Director, Talent Beyond Boundaries
- Cosmina Morariu, Director, Fragomen Worldwide

Presented by



Making Use of OMAFRA Resources to Bring Back Rural Main Streets

The suggestion that the Municipality of South Dundas should look at developing and implement a Streetscape Project was highlighted in a report that was conducted under the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE) program. Other OMAFRA Resources such as the Downtown Revitalization Program and the Rural Economic Development Funding Program played a significant part in the project. For more than half a century, the Village of Morrisburg has lacked a proper Main Street atmosphere. It all started back in the mid-1950's when about a third of the Village of Morrisburg, including the Main Street area, which was the original business district was lost forever under a wall of water. The reason for this loss was because of the flooding required to construct the St. Lawrence Seaway due to the need to deepen the seaway to allow larger ships to navigate the river. This session will outline the OMAFRA resources available, how to make use of them, and steps taken by the Municipality of South Dundas on how it implemented the Morrisburg Streetscape Project. The session will also explore the lessons learned during the process and the bumps encountered along the way from start to finish.

Moderator: Stephen Morris, Team Lead – Economic Development Programs Unit, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Presenters:

- Rob Hunter, Economic Development Officer, Municipality of South Dundas
- Rian Omollo, Economic Development Specialist, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- Judy Risebrough, Project Manager, Township of Uxbridge Downtown Revitalization Project

12:00 p.m.

Lunch

1:15 p.m.

Concurrent Workshop

Housing: The new frontier in workforce development

How can rural Ontario address workforce development? How is the supply and cost of housing in rural communities further complicating workforce development efforts? The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC) has just completed a regional workforce strategy incorporating the relationship of workforce development and housing. Join this session and learn about the newly-adopted Western Ontario Workforce Strategy and the related housing programs and policies to support economic development across the 15 County area.

Moderator: Belinda Wick-Graham, Director Economic & Community Development, Town of Minto

Presenters:

- Kate Burns Gallagher, Executive Director, Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus
- Aileen Murray Ec.D.(F), Mellor Murray Consulting
- Lisa Prime, Founder, Prime Strategy & Planning, Chief Planner, City of Cambridge

Growing the Food Economy

The food processing and food service industries are an important economic driver in communities across Ontario. In 2020, Ontario's food and beverage processing sector accounted for over \$14B in GDP and employed over 105,000 people, and the food services sector had over \$21B in sales and employs over 309,000 people. This session will feature Restaurant Canada and Farm Credit Canada sharing their insights and providing the latest research on sub-sector trends and opportunities to retain and grow this important

aspect of our economy through the economic recovery. Attendees will also hear from a municipality that will share their recent efforts to support the food processing and restaurants sector in their community.

Moderator: Stephen Morris, Team Lead – Economic Development Programs Unit, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Presenters:

- Chris Elliott, Senior Economist, Restaurants Canada
- David Messer, Manager, Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad (COIL), City of Guelph
- Craig Klemmer, Principal Agricultural Economist, Farm Credit Canada

Presented by



Options to invest in Canada through business succession

SuccessionMatching is a two-sided marketplace that matches buyers and sellers of small businesses. Finding financing has always been one of the biggest challenges for buyers looking to purchase a business but traditional lenders are turning down transition loans at an alarming rate. Matching international buyers with sellers in Canada is one part of the solution. But how can international buyers establish themselves in Canada? Fragomen will provide some of the available solutions.

Presenters:

- Alison Anderson, CEO of SuccessionMatching
- Cosmina Morariu, Director, Fragomen Worldwide

Presented by



2:15 p.m. Health Break & Coffee

2:45 p.m. **Closing Plenary: Leadership in Times of Recovery – Mayor’s Panel (Grand Ballroom)**
 Following up on the success of the 2021 Panel Leadership in Times of Disaster, our three Mayors return to discuss the past year as recovery presents new challenges for leaders and their teams. As leaders in our communities, we need to be aware of what is going on in our communities and on the front line in the recovery phase and adapt accordingly. What has worked in the past year, what fell flat and some lessons learned along the way.

Moderator: Kate Burns Gallagher, Executive Director, Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus

Presenters:

- Diane Therrien, Mayor of Peterborough
- David Bailey, Mayor of Brant County

3:45 p.m. Program ends