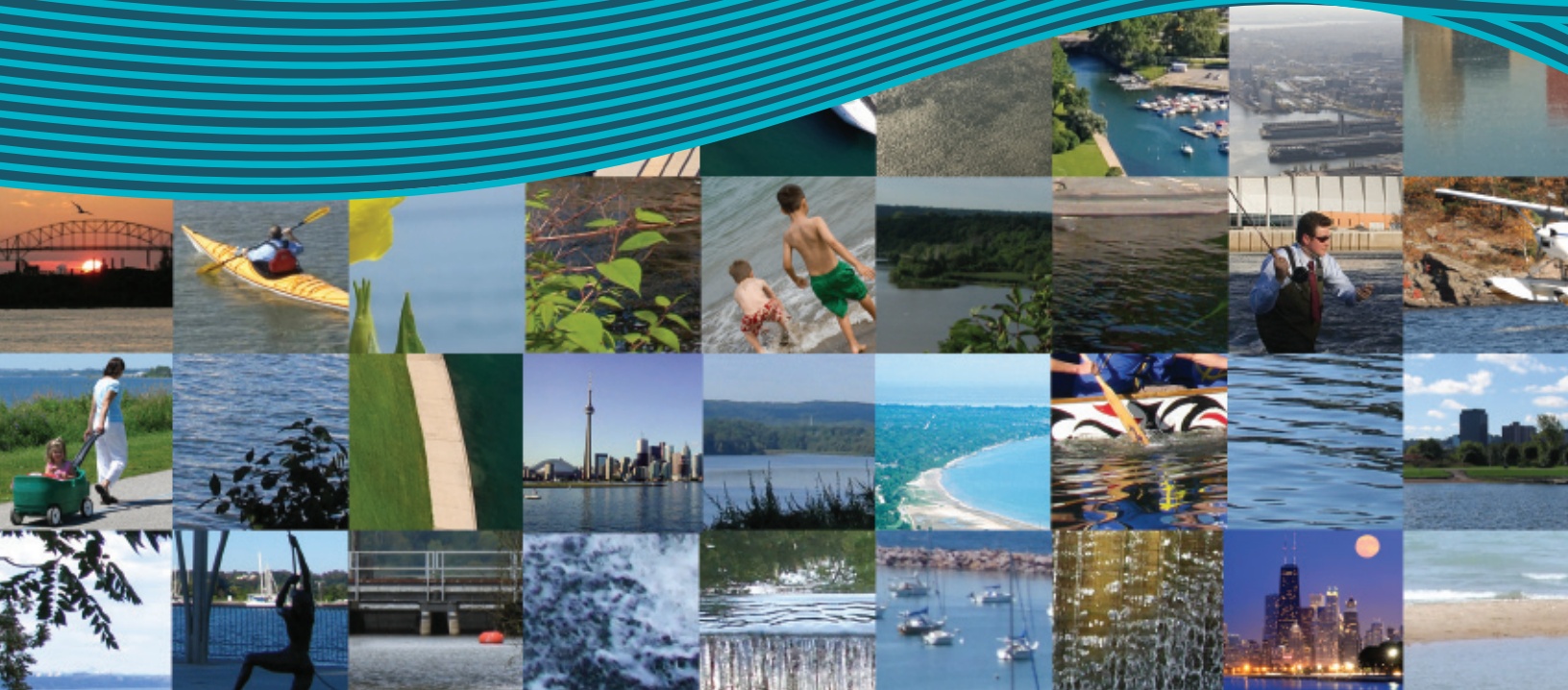
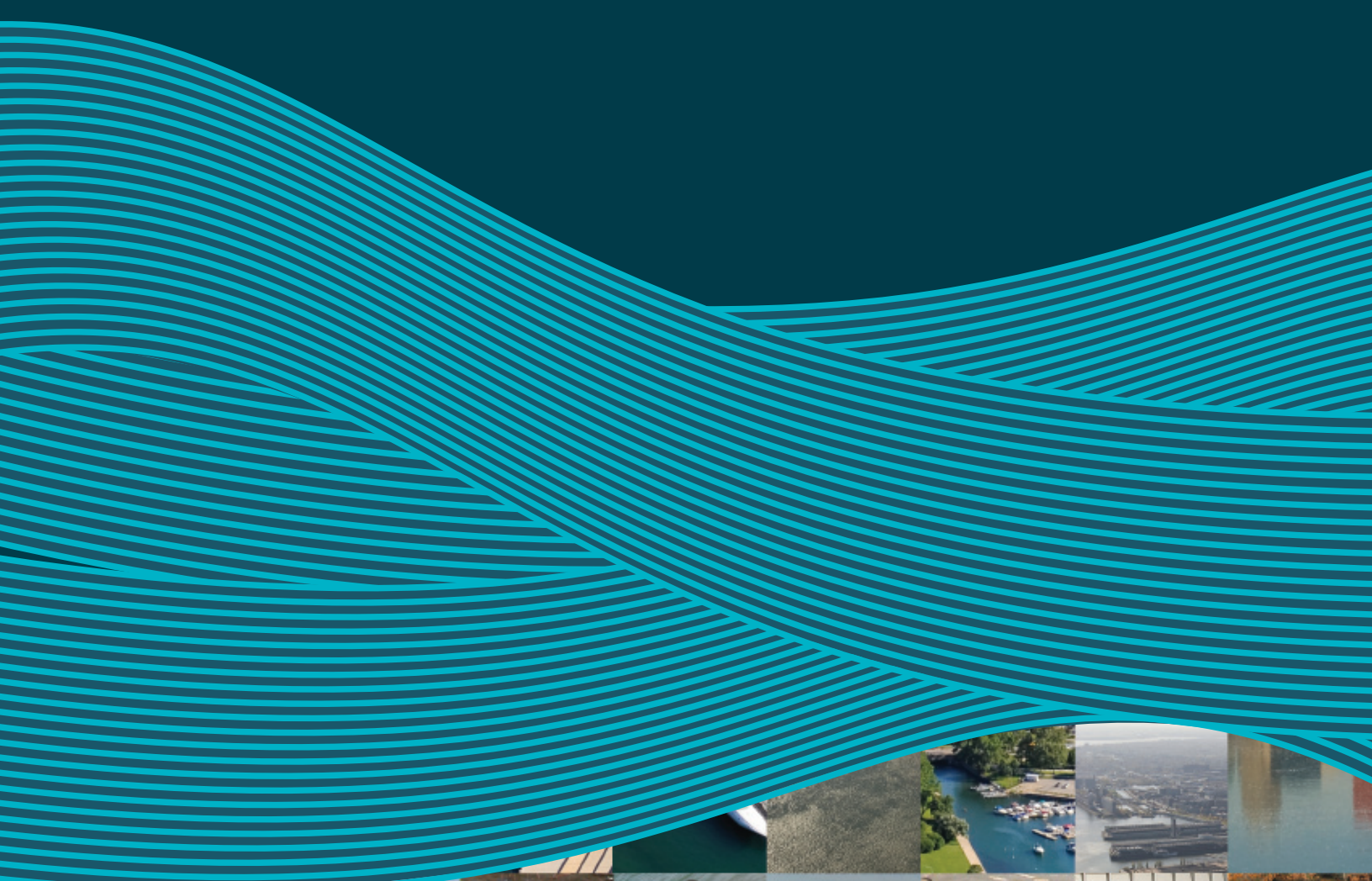


Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
Alliance des villes des Grands Lacs et du Saint-Laurent

08-09/ANNUAL REPORT



2008-2009 Board of Directors



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Founding U.S. Chair
and Director*



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Letter from the Chair



*Mayor Lynn Peterson
Thunder Bay, Ontario
Chair and Director*

Dear Friends on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River:

It has been an honour to chair the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative in its sixth year of operation. The year brought significant economic challenges for all Great Lakes and St. Lawrence communities, and the regional economy as a whole. However, it has ended on a hopeful note with the announcement of unprecedented investment in Great Lakes restoration in the U.S. 2010 federal budget.

The Cities Initiative celebrated its fifth anniversary in the summer of 2008 and quickly got off to a running start on the next five years. The Mayors of the Cities Initiative are working to integrate environmental, economic and social action within our communities to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River in a sustainable way. From our work on issues like water conservation and better beach management to local government investment in water and wastewater infrastructure, the release of the *Ontario Mayors' Great Lakes Action Plan*, and efforts to encourage short sea shipping and intermodal transportation, we are working to restore the vitality of this ecologically significant natural resource, while also ensuring the economic well-being and prosperity of our region for generations to come.

I would like to thank the members of the Cities Initiative for their work over the past year to advance this very important mission, especially the Board of Directors who dedicate a great deal of time and effort to the organization. I would also like to congratulate Mayor Dave Ross of Superior who was elected to the Board in March 2009.

I look forward to sharing our accomplishments of the past year with you and continuing to work with all of our partners in the region on the very important work of protecting, restoring and sustaining the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn Peterson".

*Lynn Peterson, Mayor of Thunder Bay
2008-2009 Chair, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative*



ACTION & RESULTS

Leading on Water Conservation

The Cities Initiative *Water Conservation Framework*, which has thirty-three participants, focused its second year on reaching out to local governments that are advancing water conservation in their communities. Framework participants, like the Town of the Blue Mountains, Ajax, Grand Rapids, Goderich, Penetanguishene, Monroe, and Windsor, took important steps this year on water conservation, including harvesting rain water, universal metering, and leak detection programs. Many other participants continue with aggressive programs. The Cities Initiative looks forward to its ongoing work with municipalities to ensure local government leads the way on water conservation. For more details: www.glslcities.org/watercons.htm.

Improving Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Beaches

Healthy, safe and swimmable beaches are vital to Great Lakes and St. Lawrence communities. The Cities Initiative continued to lead the *Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) Clean Beaches Initiative* to ensure clean beaches remain a regional priority. In partnership with federal, state, tribal and local partners, like Dr. Julie Kinzelman of Racine, the Clean Beaches Initiative encourages the use of beach sanitary surveys, compiles best practices for beach management and is working to ensure that beach managers have the resources and information they need to eliminate sources of contamination and improve Great Lakes beaches. To find out more, please visit www.gllrc.us/initiatives/beaches.

Acting on Pharmaceutical and Personal Care Product Disposal

The lack of national policies on the proper collection and disposal of pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs) in both the U.S. and Canada has resulted in municipalities assuming a disproportionate amount of responsibility on this issue. A Cities Initiative survey of members revealed that a number of communities are holding collection events and educating the public on the proper disposal of PPCPs, but many still need access to best practices and funding to conduct efforts more effectively.



Therefore, the Cities Initiative has developed a program that will help local government act where efforts by other orders of government and industry have been inadequate and that will advocate for national PPCP policies that emphasize extended producer responsibility. Stay tuned to www.glslcities.org for further developments.

Exploring Water Quality with NASA

On the heels of the well received water levels project showcased at the 2008 Annual Meeting, NASA DEVELOP interns Deivya Bansal and Mehul Nahar initiated a new project to investigate the occurrence of the green algae, *Cladophora*, over the last five years on the Great Lakes. The project will help frame and clarify the problem of *Cladophora* through visualizations made from NASA satellite imagery. To see the work completed by the NASA DEVELOP students to date, please visit www.glslcities.org/annualmtg08.htm.

THE VOICE OF CITIES

On the National Platform

With federal elections in both the U.S. and Canada in 2008, the Cities Initiative worked to ensure the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence were given attention in the national arena. Letters were sent to all Canadian federal government party leaders and all U.S. presidential candidates seeking information on how their administrations would address issues facing the Lakes and River, and how they would work with cities on these matters. To see responses, please visit www.glslcities.org/news.htm.

Efforts by the Mayors and others within the region resulted in an unprecedented focus on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence during the national elections. In fact, U.S. presidential candidates John McCain, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama signed a pledge regarding Great Lakes protection and restoration. During the campaign, candidate Obama released the *Obama-Biden Plan for Great Lakes Restoration* which included a commitment of \$5 billion to the Great Lakes over five years for restoration efforts.



Cities at Great Lakes Days

The Cities Initiative was well represented this year at Great Lakes Days – the annual Great Lakes event in Washington D.C. – by Mayor George Heartwell of Grand Rapids, Pat Carey from Chicago, Mary Morgan and Jeff Vito from Superior and Cities Initiative staff. Mayor Heartwell gave opening remarks at the Canadian Embassy Reception along with U.S. Congressman James Oberstar. Executive Director David Ullrich and Program Manager Melissa Soline accompanied Mayor Heartwell to meetings with Senator Debbie Stabenow and Representative Vern Ehlers, as well as meetings with other House and Senate staff, to discuss the legislative priorities of the Cities Initiative for protection and restoration efforts. The Cities Initiative contingent also met with the Acting Assistant Administrator for Water for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to discuss stimulus funding for cities and with Major General Don T. Riley of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss the Corps' work in the Great Lakes. Immediately following Great Lakes Days, President Obama announced details on the 2010 federal budget, which included \$475 million for the Great Lakes region. In light of this funding prospect, Cities Initiative staff continues to work with the Great Lakes states and other partners to make the case for federal investment in the region.

Economic Stimulus in the Region

At the December 2008 Midyear Board of Directors meeting, the Board passed a resolution calling for economic recovery in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region through federal investments targeting infrastructure, jobs development and a free and open border (see www.glslcities.org/news.htm for a copy of the December 12, 2008 resolution). As the global economic situation worsened in late 2008, both the U.S. and Canadian federal governments took action to revitalize the economy and spur job growth. The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region is poised to make effective use of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding and Building Canada funding, given the vast water and wastewater infrastructure needs, habitat restoration work and cleanup efforts in Areas of Concern. The Cities Initiative is working to ensure its members stay informed about funding opportunities and plans to track Great Lakes – St. Lawrence restoration projects that are supported by stimulus funding.



SEATS AT THE TABLE

Canada Ontario Agreement Memorandum of Cooperation (COA-MOC)

The Cities Initiative engaged in an intensive six month process with the Province of Ontario in preparation for the *Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem (COA) 2010* renegotiation. Through the COA-MOC process the Cities Initiative, on behalf of its members and other Ontario municipalities, and the Province worked to develop common objectives and to address issues of concern related to the Great Lakes.

Participating mayors prepared a report, entitled *At the Shoreline: A Mayors' Collaborative Action Plan to Protect the Great Lakes*, which included a five-point action plan for collaboration with the Canadian federal and Ontario governments. Cities Initiative members Goderich, Halton Region, Kingston, Niagara Region, St. Catharines, Thunder Bay, Toronto and Town of the Blue Mountains participated on the working group; Nicola Crawhall, Sarah Rang and Korice Moir of the Cities Initiative supported the process. Recommendations for the COA 2010 renegotiation were presented at the first summit of Mayors and Ministers in May 2009 by Mayor Peterson, Mayor David Miller of Toronto, Mayor Deb Shewfelt of Goderich, Mayor Brian McMullan of St. Catharines, Mayor Harvey Rosen of Kingston, Mayor Ellen Anderson of the Town of the Blue Mountains, Regional Chair Peter Partington of Niagara Region and Councillor Alan Johnston on behalf of Regional Chair Gary Carr of Halton Region. The Action Plan calls for five areas of collaboration:

1. *Create a municipal-provincial-federal Great Lakes table*
2. *Improve and promote beaches and natural shorelines*
3. *Attack nuisance and toxic algae*
4. *Reduce untreated sewage and storm water discharges into the Great Lakes*
5. *Build a business case and measure results of Great Lakes investments*

For more details on the COA-MOC process and to read the municipal recommendations, please visit www.glslcities.org/coamoc.htm.

Implementing the Great Lakes Compact and Agreement

The *Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact* took effect in December 2008, and the corresponding *Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement* has been accepted by the Ontario parliament, while the Province of Quebec has drafted legislation to implement the Agreement. Mayors played a key role throughout the process to help make this a reality. A framework is now in place to help the region manage the withdrawal of water from the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River in a sustainable manner. The Cities Initiative remains involved in Compact and Agreement implementation by participating on the Water Use Advisory Panel, the Ontario Annex Advisory Panel and an advisory panel for the development of Ontario's water conservation program. The Cities Initiative continues to advocate for state and provincial water conservation programs to contain clear targets and time frames for action. In fact, the Cities Initiative's *Water Conservation Framework* target of 15% by 2015 has been referenced as a model for states and provinces to consider. The Cities Initiative will continue to partner with Governors and Premiers to implement the Compact and Agreement and lead with its aggressive water conservation efforts.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Cities Initiative 2008 Annual Member Meeting and Conference, *Cities of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence: Prosperity, Vitality, Sustainability*, was held in Toronto on July 16-18, 2008. Members passed 15 resolutions, including calls for increased federal funding for aging water and wastewater infrastructure and the acceleration of the cleanup of Areas of Concern. A scorecard showing the positive outcomes from the resolutions passed by the organization can be found at www.glslcities.org/resolutions.htm. Highlights from the meeting and conference include:

- *Mayor Peterson became the new Chair, Mayor Heartwell the Vice Chair and Mayor Denis Lapointe of Salaberry de Valleyfield the Secretary/Treasurer of the Cities Initiative;*
- *Mayor Peterson and Minister of the Environment for the Province of Ontario, John Gerretsen, signed, and Mayor Miller witnessed, a memorandum of cooperation through which the Cities Initiative and the Ontario Government agreed to engage and consult with Ontario municipalities as the Ontario Government enters negotiations on the COA 2010.*
- *The Town of Ajax received the second annual Wege Small Cities Sustainability Best Practices Award for the Town's outstanding efforts to improve their nearshore water quality. The award has been generously sponsored by the Wege Foundation.*

Visit www.glslcities.org/annualmtg08.htm for more details on the 2008 Annual Member Meeting and Conference.



MIDYEAR BOARD MEETING



Mayor Peterson chaired the December 2008 Midyear Board Meeting in Toronto that included a packed agenda and press conference.

In addition to the general business of the organization, the Board achieved the following:

- *Passed a resolution addressing the growing need for economic recovery and reinvestment within the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence region, including federal investments that target infrastructure and jobs development and an open and safe border that allows for the free movement of commerce and people;*
- *Agreed to refine the organization's focus over the next five years to include the integration of environmental, economic and social agendas with respect to the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River;*
- *Approved moving forward with a pharmaceutical and personal care product program;*
- *Agreed to develop recommendations for action on intermodal transportation;*
- *Agreed on a formal resolution process for submitting resolutions to be considered by members at the annual meeting (pending member approval) and;*
- *Selected Milwaukee as the 2010 Annual Members Meeting and Conference host city.*

To see more from the December 12, 2008 meeting, please visit www.glslcities.org/news.htm.

OPERATIONS, MEMBERSHIP & OUTREACH

Operations

The Cities Initiative continued its efforts to grow and strengthen operations in 2008-2009 with a focus on staffing, communications and financial planning. The Cities Initiative welcomed four new members to its staff: Sarah Rang, Acting Deputy Director; Korice Moir, Project Assistant; Pam Kaput, Intern; and Angie Ziech, Intern. The Cities Initiative is exploring further growth of its staff.

The Cities Initiative continued to develop its communications strategy to increase media coverage for the organization and members, and to improve outreach to prospective members and other key partners. The financial planning process undertaken by the Cities Initiative aims to strengthen the organization's financial base by growing membership, increasing grant funding and taking a more strategic approach to annual planning and budgetary development.



The Cities Initiative established the Operations Committee in 2009 to help address key operational issues for the organization. Chaired by Mayor McMullan, with Mayor Anderson, Mayor Bob Benedetti of Beaconsfield, Mayor John Piskura of Sheffield Lake and Mayor Ross as members, the Operations Committee is responsible for reviewing resolutions for the annual meeting, reviewing the annual budget and assisting Cities Initiative staff with financial planning and management.

Membership

The Cities Initiative membership has grown to include 64 members from across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region. Since the 2008 Annual Meeting, the following communities have joined the organization:

- *City of Ashland*
- *Halton Region*
- *Township of Tay*
- *City of Muskegon*
- *City of Grand Haven*
- *Ville de Montréal-Est*
- *Township of Tiny*
- *Village of Spring Lake*
- *Township of Huron-Kinloss*

Several other cities have indicated they will join in the near future. To see a complete list of Cities Initiative members, please visit www.glslcities.org/members.htm.

Outreach

Cities Initiative staff and member mayors had a number of opportunities throughout the year to represent the Cities Initiative and its members at various policy and decision making tables as well as stakeholder events. Cities Initiative outreach this past year included:

- *Regional Chair Partington representing the Cities Initiative on the Great Lakes Wind Collaborative Steering Committee;*
- *Mayor Anderson speaking at an Ontario Fisheries and Oceans meeting on illegal dredging in the Georgian Bay and organizing the follow-up meeting on a Georgian Bay Waterfront plan;*
- *Mayor Shewfelt, Mayor Rosen, and Mayor Peterson speaking at the Healthy Lakes, Strong Ontario stakeholder meetings and;*
- *Staff speaking roles at the EPA National Beach Conference, Healing our Waters Conference, Midwest Water Analysts Association, Canada-United States Law Institute, Western Lake Erie Basin Conference, Inland Ports Across North America, University of Michigan, Federal Reserve Bank, Illinois Bar Association, Grand Rapids Art Museum, Latournell Conference, Canadian Association of Water Quality Conference and the Good Roads and Rural Ontario Municipalities Conference.*

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (Cities Initiative) is a binational coalition of mayors and other local officials that works actively with federal, state, provincial, tribal and first nation governments to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River. Founded by Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago in 2003 and quickly joined by Mayor David Miller of Toronto, the Cities Initiative has more than 60 member cities from around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region. The Cities Initiative is an independent 501(c)(3) headquartered in Chicago.



The Cities Initiative would like to thank the Joyce Foundation (www.joycefdn.org), the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (www.mott.org) and the Wege Foundation (www.wegefoundation.org) for their generous support.



Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
Alliance des villes des Grands Lacs et du Saint-Laurent

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