



SUMMARY

The 130 members of the Cities Initiative were invited to experience Montreal's 375th anniversary during the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative's 14th Annual Meeting and Conference, hosted by Mayor Denis Coderre. This year's theme Cities and Strategic Partnership brought together municipalities, indigenous people, various organizations and stakeholders to discuss the importance of partnerships to municipalities, including city-to-city, public-private, inter-governmental, and with indigenous people, to advance protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

ANNUAL MEMBER'S MEETING

Wednesday June 14, 2017 began with a board of directors meeting in the morning, chaired by Madame Rouleau and Mayor Coderre, where as part of business the board began a discussion about strategic planning for the organization in light of our staffing and leadership transitions underway. Members then meet in regional meetings for Ontario, Quebec and the US. The member's meeting in the afternoon was the occasion to elect new members to the board: Mayor Paul Dyster (Niagara Falls, NY) was elected chair of the Cities Initiative, Mayor Sandra Cooper (Town of Collingwood, ON) as vice-chair while Mayor Régis Labeaume took on the role of secretary-treasurer. Mayor Scott Warnock (Township of Tay, ON), Mayor Mike Vandersteen (Sheboygan, WI) and Mayor Jim Carruthers (Traverse City, MI) were added to the board of directors. The membership passed eight resolutions this year covering a wide range of topics, including restricting the use of coal tar sealants, aging oil pipelines and Enbridge Line 5, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence federal restoration funding, the maritime industry, support for the Wisconsin-Lake Michigan Marine Sanctuary, action on pharmaceuticals and personal care products, the public management of water services and encouraging the designation of the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence and Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin a UNESCO world biosphere reserve.



The remainder of the member's meeting was spent addressing topics including the Waukesha water diversion challenge, our climate change and Global Covenant of Mayors work, efforts to halt Asian carp, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence federal investment in restoration work, the staffing and leadership transition underway at the Cities Initiative, as well as receiving updates on the issues discussed during the regional meetings earlier in the day. The membership heard from Mayor John McKean of the Town of the Blue Mountains, recipient of the 2016 Wege Award, with an update of the Town's solar-powered light installation initiative. The 2017 Wege Award was then presented to Mayor Dyster and the City of Niagara Falls, NY, for a collaborative effort with the Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper and the US Army Corps of Engineers to institute a habitat restoration program for Hype Park Lake. The group will use funds for shoreline restoration to support wildlife habitat and reduce water eutrophication, including invasive species removal and wetland recreation. The day capped off with a reception hosted by Mayor Coderre and the City of Montreal at City Hall and an evening reception at the famous Biosphere.





ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The annual conference kicked off Thursday morning June 15, 2017 with welcoming and opening remarks from Montreal Borough Mayor Chantal Rouleau, Chief Christine Zachary-Deom of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake, and a keynote address by David Heurtel, Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and the Fight against Climate Change. The first day of the conference also saw keynote addresses by Pierre Béland, former IJC Commissioner, researcher, writer and conservation expert, Christine St-Pierre, Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie, and Madame Rouleau on Montreal's sustainable water management work. We held a press conference in the morning where Mayor Dyster and Mayor Rouleau emphasized our call for federal investment in Great Lakes and St. Lawrence protection and restoration and our commitment to climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, and that featured Mayor Frank Klipsch of Davenport, Iowa representing the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative and Deputy Mayor Jarkko Virtanen of Turku, Finland, representing the Union of Baltic Cities. The panels of the first day included (visit <https://glslcities.org/events/annual-meeting/montreal-2017/> for presentations):

- **City to City Partnerships** with speakers Mayor Serge Péloquin of Ville de Sorel-Tracy, Deputy Mayor Virtanen, and Mayor Klipsch;
- **Public Private Partnerships for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Municipalities** with Mayor Tom Barrett of Milwaukee as moderator, and panelists Steven Hobbs, Director, The Canadian Council for Public Private Partnerships, Johanne Mullen of PwC and Pierre J. Hamel, Professor, INRS Urbanisation
- **Partnerships to Address Climate Change** with Deputy Mayor Michelle Morin-Doyle of Québec City as moderator and panelists Kimberly Hill Knott, Project Director, Detroit Climate Action Collaborative; Cindy Toth, Director of Environmental Policy, Town of Oakville; and Roger Lachance, Directeur du service de l'environnement, Ville de Montréal.
- **Partnerships with Indigenous People and Communities** with Mayor Keith Hobbs of Thunder Bay as moderator, and panelists Chief Christine Zachary-Deom of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake, Frank Ettawageshik, Executive Director of United Tribes of Michigan, and Dr. Dean Jacobs, Consultation Manager with Walpole Island First Nation.

On the first day of the conference we also debuted the video *Great Lake Restoration Initiative: Success Stories* and heard from Mayor Dyster, Mayor Vandersteen and Mayor John Paterson of Leamington, ON on the value of federal Great Lakes investment to their communities and others. We ended the day with an amazing experience for conference attendees at the Cirque Du Soleil show Volta along the St. Lawrence River.

The last day of the conference, Friday June 16, 2017, opened with an inspirational keynote address by Frank Ettawageshik. The address was followed by the panel *Intergovernmental Partnerships for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence*, with Mayor Mitch Twolan of Huron-Kinloss as moderator, and panelists Mayor Denis Lapointe of Salaberry de Valleyfield, David St. Pierre, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Chicago, and Tim Eder, Executive Director of the Great Lakes Commission (above). We were treated to a presentation by Jenna Williams of the NASA DEVELOP Program on the work they have been doing for the Cities Initiative on harmful algal blooms. Towards the close of the day, Mayor Steve Parish, Councillor Joanne Dies, Councillor Pat Brown, and Regional Councillor Colleen Jordan gave a brief presentation on the 2018 Annual Member Meeting and Conference that will be held in Ajax, Ontario June 13-15, 2018. Madame Rouleau then closed the 2017 conference. For presentations, media documents and pictures from the event, please visit <https://glslcities.org/events/annual-meeting/montreal-2017/>.

