



GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE
CITIES INITIATIVE
L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES
DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT



GREAT LAKES and ST. LAWRENCE CITIES INITIATIVE
2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Economic Transformation – Tapping into Water for Sustainable Prosperity

Montréal, QC | May 15-17, 2024
Marriott Chateau Champlain – 1050 Rue De la Gauchetière O

Preliminary Agenda - February 20, 2024

Note: This is a draft agenda. Content and timing of sessions is subject to change.

All sessions and activities will be taking place at the Marriott Chateau Champlain, unless otherwise noted.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15

8:30 am Cities Initiative Member Meeting (restricted to Cities Initiative members)

11:30 am Member Meeting concludes / Free time

1:00 pm 2024 Annual Conference Opening and Welcome

1:45 pm Plenary #1 – Transforming Economies

Leading by Example: Showcasing Basin Cities' Progress on Sustainable, Resilient and Inclusive Economic Transformation

3:00 pm Break

3:15 pm Plenary # 2 – Transforming Energy
Local Power: Catalyzing the Transition to Clean and Renewable Energy at the Community Level

From hydropower and nuclear energy to community solar and geothermal, communities and utilities across the basin are pivoting away from fossil fuels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality and seek a cleaner, more resilient energy future. Local governments are leaders in this historic transition, working with regional energy providers, industry partners and community groups to



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innovate and implement clean and renewable energy. Municipal authorities will also have to balance the energy transition, including grid electrification, with population growth and industry development goals. This session will discuss opportunities for local governments to become energy innovators and help lead the way on local power generation through strategic partnerships, community-led initiatives and innovative financing and procurement tools.

- 4:15 pm** Break
- 4:30 pm** Transforming Energy breakout sessions
- 5:30 pm** Day 1 Closing / Free Time
- 7:00 pm** Cities Initiative Networking Dinner Reception – Port of Montreal Tower – *Hosted by the Montreal Port Authority*

THURSDAY, MAY 16

- 9:00 am** Breakfast
- 9:30 am** Plenary # 3 – Transforming Transportation

Sustainable Commerce, Transit and Mobility: Reducing Emissions and Building New Economic Opportunities in Moving Goods and People through Freshwater Waterways and Communities

Sustainable transportation of people and goods across our waterways is at the heart of transforming our regional economy. Governments and the marine industry are working together to decrease pollution and strengthen supply chains across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway. Cruise operators are collaborating to reduce emissions, protect water quality and implement stewardship initiatives at their destinations. Basin communities are also contributing to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by improving transit and micromobility while enhancing the use of waterways, connections between people and places and quality of life. This session will highlight opportunities for local governments to move goods and people more sustainably through our waterways and communities while protecting our freshwater.



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- 10:30 am** Break
- 10:45 am** Transforming Transportation breakout sessions
- 11:45 am** Lunch
- 12:30 pm** Luncheon/Special Sessions
- 1:30 pm** Break
- 1:45 pm** Plenary # 4 – Transforming Industry

A Thriving Blue-Green Economic Corridor: Promoting Freshwater Innovation, Green Businesses and Jobs and Sustainable Industry Practices

Transforming the basin from an industrial heartland into a thriving green-blue economic corridor requires communities to foster freshwater innovation, attract green businesses and jobs and encourage sustainable industry practices. Freshwater innovation hubs are bringing together innovative firms, educational institutions and other stakeholders to create blue jobs and increase economic activity while improving water stewardship. Local governments, including economic development agencies, are playing pivotal roles in the green transition by coordinating with green businesses and crafting workforce development plans. Circular economy and other sustainable practices are increasingly being adopted by industries wanting to improve their bottom line and appeal to environmentally-conscious investors and consumers. This session will explore how local governments and others are working together to nurture blue-green economic transformation at the local and regional levels.

- 2:45 pm** Break
- 3:00 pm** Transforming Industry breakout sessions
- 4:00 pm** Break
- 4:15 pm** Plenary #5 – Transforming Industry

Presented by AquaAction



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- 5:15 pm** Day 2 Closing / Free time
- 6:30 pm** Cities Initiative Cocktail Reception
- 7:15 pm** Cities Initiative Annual Awards Dinner

FRIDAY, MAY 17

- 8:00 am** Breakfast
- 8:30 am** Plenary #6 – Transforming Waterfronts

Waterfronts for Everyone: Designing Accessible, Multi-Purpose and Resilient Centers of Environmental and Socioeconomic Revitalization

Freshwater restoration and protection efforts across the basin are elevating waterfronts as centers of environmental, economic and social activity. Basin communities are increasingly designing accessible, multi-purpose waterfronts that effectively balance public access and recreational opportunities with housing and economic development. With increased risks from extreme weather events and the new climate reality, local governments must also create resilient waterfronts that can withstand variable water levels and remain vibrant over time. This session will showcase successful examples of waterfront revitalization from across the basin, with special emphasis on how local governments can develop waterfronts that prioritize the health of our economies and communities – and, of course, our freshwater.

- 9:30 am** Break
- 9:45 am** Transforming Waterfronts breakout sessions
- 10:45 am** Annual Conference Closing Ceremony
- 11:00 am** Annual Conference Adjourns
- 12:00 pm** Lunch Boxes Available
- 12:30 pm** Educational Tours



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**Economic
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Option #1 – Visit with City of Montreal/Metropolitan Community of Montreal

Option #2 – Visit of Kahnawake Mohawk Territory

5:00 pm

Return to Montreal Chateau Champlain Hotel