



**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**

*Presented by*



**Corporation de Gestion  
de la Voie Maritime  
du Saint-Laurent**

**The St. Lawrence  
Seaway Management  
Corporation**

*Preliminary Agenda*

*as of March 26, 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** Pledge Signing Ceremony
- 2:00 pm** Plenary #1 – Transforming our Economy

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

**Speakers**

- **Valérie Plante**, Mayor, Montréal, QC
- **Bruno Marchand**, Mayor, Québec City, QC
- **Cavalier Johnson**, Mayor, Milwaukee, WI



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- 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 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** Concurrent Breakout Sessions – Transforming Energy
- I. Advancing Clean and Renewable Energy in Your Community: Policy Considerations, Opportunities, and Challenges**
  - II. Advancing Clean and Renewable Energy in Your Community: Project Implementation Considerations, Opportunities and Challenges**
- 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**

- 8:30 am** Breakfast



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**9:00 am** Day 2 Welcome and Opening Session

**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.

**Speakers**

- **Mathieu Saint-Pierre**, President and CEO, St. Lawrence Economic Development Council (SODES)

**10:30 am** Break

**10:45 am** Concurrent Breakout Sessions – Transforming Transportation

- I. Expanding Sustainable, Water-Borne Commerce, Transit and Mobility in Your Community: Policy Considerations, Opportunities and Challenges**
- II. Expanding Sustainable, Water-Borne Commerce, Transit and Mobility in Your Community: Project Implementation Considerations, Opportunities and Challenges**

**11:45 am** Lunch



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**12:15 pm** Luncheon/Special Sessions

### **Economic Reconciliation in an Era of Transformation**

First Nations and Tribal Communities are leading the way in generating innovative industries and initiatives that are helping to tackle the global climate crisis and better steward our waters. At the same time, those communities and industries continue to face barriers in accessing capital and opportunities for growth. As a region, we lose out when good business ideas originating here can't find the funding, training, and access to markets to flourish. In this keynote session, we will examine the hard truths regarding barriers to economic and business development in First Nations and Tribal communities. We will also explore the role municipal governments and industry can play to foster Economic Reconciliation by opening up pathways to support Indigenous-led business growth and build stronger relations to tackle our shared challenges together.

#### **Speakers**

- **Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer**, Grand Chief, Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke
- **Patrick Madahbee**, Commissioner on Governance, Anishinabek Nation

**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



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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.

#### **Moderator**

- **Mark Fisher**, CEO, Council of the Great Lakes Region

#### **Speakers**

- **Alaina Harkness**, Executive Director, Current

**2:45 pm**

Break

**3:00 pm**

Concurrent Breakout Sessions – Transforming Transportation

### **I. Promoting Freshwater Innovation, Blue and Green Jobs and Industry Transformation in Your Community: Policy Considerations, Opportunities and Challenges**

#### **Speakers**

- **Emily Simonson**, Director of Strategic Initiatives, U.S. Water Alliance

### **II. Promoting Freshwater Innovation, Blue and Green Jobs and Industry Transformation in Your Community: Project Implementation Considerations, Opportunities and Challenges**

**4:00 pm**

Break

**4:15 pm**

Plenary #5 – Transforming Industry

*Presented by AquaAction*

**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.

#### **Speakers**

- **Yvonne Hamlin**, Mayor, Collingwood, ON
- **Catherine Vallières-Roland**, Deputy Mayor, Québec City, QC

**9:30 am** Break

**9:45 am** Concurrent Breakout Sessions – Transforming Waterfronts

- I. Developing Resilient, Multi-Use Waterfronts in Your Community: Policy Considerations, Opportunities and Challenges**
- II. Developing Resilient, Multi-Use Waterfronts in Your Community: Project Implementation Considerations, Opportunities and Challenges**

**10:45 am** Annual Conference Closing Ceremony



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**11:00 am** Annual Conference Adjourns

**12:00 pm** Lunch Boxes Available

**12:30 pm** Educational Tours

**Option #1 – Visit of the Jean-R.-Marcotte Wastewater Treatment Plant**

**Option #2 – Visit of Kahnawá:ke Mohawk Territory**

**5:00 pm** Return to Marriott Chateau Champlain Hotel