



**FRESH COAST
ECONOMIC CORRIDOR**

ADVANCING OUR JOURNEY
TO PROSPERITY

2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE PARTNERSHIP GUIDE

May 6-8, 2026 – Hamilton, ON



**GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE
CITIES INITIATIVE**

**L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES
DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT**

Who Are We

THE GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE CITIES INITIATIVE

FOUNDED IN 2003, we are a multinational coalition of mayors and local government and Indigenous leaders representing more than 400 communities. Together, we work actively to promote economic prosperity for our region and protect the freshwater resources that are the foundation of our region's success. Our member communities represent over 22 million people across the region, spanning from Duluth, Minnesota to Gaspé, Quebec.

Working together, we are building a stronger, more resilient, and more economically vibrant region. As an organization, we work to prepare our members to tackle some of the region's most pressing challenges head-on and leverage some of the unique opportunities that come from being in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region—which contains over 80 percent of North America's fresh water and represents over \$8 trillion in annual economic activity.



Our Annual Conference

Building the Fresh Coast Economic Corridor

More than 300 attendees, including municipal and Indigenous leaders, government officials, and industry leaders from across the region, will come together in Hamilton, Ontario to share solutions and innovative ways in which they are working to transform our region's economy and build opportunities for sustainable prosperity for their communities.

In September 2025, the Cities Initiative launched its Economic Transformation Action Plan: A Blueprint for Economic Growth and Freshwater Stewardship in the Great Lakes & St. Lawrence River Region. The Action Plan presents a vision for developing the Fresh Coast Economic Corridor that unites efforts for economic development from Lake Superior to the Gulf of the St. Lawrence.

OUR ACTION PLAN COVERS FOUR STRATEGIC PILLARS:

- Attracting and retaining responsible industries
- Supporting energy resilience and security
- Expanding water-borne commerce and mobility
- Revitalizing and renewing waterfronts

At our 2026 Annual Conference, we will gather to look forward to the implementation of our Action Plan. Together, we will develop collaborative strategies and partnerships that will empower us to build the economy of the future, with an eye toward anticipating emerging industry needs, adapting communities for economic transformation, and attracting new investments to the region.



JOIN US IN HAMILTON AND HELP US BUILD
THE FRESH COAST ECONOMIC CORRIDOR.

Be Part of Something Bigger – Partner with Us



We've designed various ways for your organization to partner with us and build up your visibility, engagement, and impact with our audience. By partnering with us, you will:

- **Connect with more than 300 key decision-makers** at our event
- **Get your brand in front of over 1,000 contacts** in local government
- **Access thought leaders and industry champions** throughout the region
- **Work with a professional team to maximize your engagement** before, during, and after our event
- **Demonstrate your commitment to sustainable development and protecting our lakes and rivers** for the benefit of future generations



Premier Category

Make your mark as premier partners of our Annual Conference and gain top-level visibility and engagement before, during, and after the event.



Presenting Partner

\$40,000

As Presenting Partner, your brand leads our signature event with maximum visibility, priority speaking and engagement opportunities, and recognition as the driving force behind our annual gathering.

BENEFITS

- **Top Conference Visibility** – Logo included on main stage backdrop; special signage throughout the Annual Conference space; special message to event guests
- **Additional Conference Branding** – Top logo placement on name badges, communications to members and conference guests, and event webpage
- **Co-branding opportunity for the Exhibitor Hall**
- **Opening keynote opportunity** - 15-minute presentation during the opening session of the Annual Conference (Wed, May 6)
- **Conference closing ceremony remarks** – Opportunity to provide 5-minute closing remarks during the conference closing ceremony (Thu, May 7)
- One (1) year membership in the **Industry Leaders Circle (ILC)**, an exclusive business roundtable fostering engagement between Cities Initiative members and the private sector
- **Exclusive sponsorship of the VIP Industry Leaders Circle Reception**
- **Eight (8) complimentary tickets** to the full Annual Conference and receptions; 50% discount on additional Annual Conference tickets
- **Three (3) invitations** to the Board of Directors Annual Dinner (Tue, May 5)
- **One (1) complimentary exhibitor table** with priority positioning in the exhibitor hall
- **Opportunity to have sponsor-branded materials handed to participants** as they register (optional; materials to be provided by partner at their expense)
- **Invitation to join 2026 Annual Conference Steering Committee**



Companion Partner

\$25,000



As a Companion Partner, your organization gains prominent visibility at our event, opportunities for engagement, and recognition as a key supporter advancing the success of our annual gathering.

BENEFITS

- **Prime Conference Visibility** – Logo included on main stage backdrop; special signage throughout the Annual Conference space
- **Additional Conference Branding** – Premier logo placement on event webpage and communications to Cities Initiative members and conference guests
- **Keynote speaking opportunity** – 10-minute introductory speaking remarks at Day 2 opening plenary session (Thu, May 7)
- **Five (5) complimentary tickets** to the full annual conference and receptions; 50% discount on additional Annual Conference tickets
- **One (1) complimentary exhibitor table** with priority positioning in the exhibitor hall
- **Two (2) invitations to the Board of Directors Annual Dinner** (Tue, May 5)
- **Opportunity to have sponsor-branded materials handed** to participants as they register (optional; materials to be provided by partner at their expense)
- **Invitation to join 2026 Annual Conference Steering Committee**
- One (1) year membership in the **Industry Leaders Circle (ILC)**, an exclusive business roundtable fostering engagement between Cities Initiative members and the private sector

THE INDUSTRY LEADERS CIRCLE

The Cities Initiative understands that the strongest results come from robust dialogue and engagement between local government and the private sector. The Industry Leaders Circle operates under the premise that practical, collaborative, and innovative solutions are necessary to address shared issues in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region. Through regular meetings, discussions, and engagements, ILC members work hand-in-hand with Cities Initiative member communities to implement the Action Plan for Economic Transformation and turn our region into the freshwater economic powerhouse of North America.



Programming Category

\$15,000

Go beyond visibility and collaborate with us to craft engaging sessions that spotlight innovation, spark dialogue, and drive real impact.

NEXUS H2O SPONSORSHIP (MAY 6)

\$15,000 – One package available

Join us as the leading partner for Nexus H2O water innovation showcase, a new conference segment highlighting solutions to strengthen municipal water systems and featuring **The PitchH2O**, an interactive forum for startups and cities to showcase innovative, practical solutions.



BENEFITS

- **10-minute keynote** speaking opportunity during Nexus H2O
- **Opportunity to announce The PitchH2O winners** at the Awards Dinner (Thu, May 7). Additional benefits include:
 - **Prime Visibility during Nexus H2O**
 - **Additional Conference Branding** – Premier logo placement on event webpage and communications to Cities Initiative members and conference guests
- **Five (5) complimentary tickets** to the full Annual Conference and receptions; 50% discount on additional Annual Conference tickets
- **One (1) invitation to the Board of Directors Annual Dinner** (Tue, May 5)
- **One (1) complimentary exhibitor table** with priority positioning in the exhibitor hall
- **One (1) year membership in the Cities Initiative's Industry Leaders Circle**



Networking Breakfasts

(Thu, May 7)

\$12,500

Fuel the conversation and position your brand at the center of meaningful connections by sponsoring a networking breakfast on the second day of the conference. At our 2026 Annual Conference, we will host three networking breakfasts, each with its own theme:

- Climate Resilient Coastal Communities
- Port Cities and Marine Champions
- Powering the Transformation

BENEFITS OF SPONSORING A NETWORKING BREAKFAST INCLUDE:

- **10-minute speaking opportunity** to open the session and engage an interested audience
- **Work with our team to develop engaging content** for your sponsored breakfast
- **Additional Conference Branding** – Premier logo placement on event webpage and communications to Cities Initiative members and conference guests
- **Four (4) complimentary tickets** to the full Annual Conference and receptions; 50% discount on additional Annual Conference tickets
- **One (1) complimentary exhibitor table** with priority positioning in the exhibitor hall
- **One year membership in the Cities Initiative's Industry Leaders Circle**



Additional Categories

In addition to those mentioned above, we offer an array of opportunities to partner with us for our Annual Conference, ranging from featured speaking engagements to high-visibility exposure for your brand. We would also be happy to work with you to build a tailored package.

SPEAKING OPPORTUNITIES

Take the stage, share your insights, and showcase your expertise —sponsored speaking opportunities put your organization in the spotlight with our audience and in our program. All sponsored speaking opportunities come with a one-year membership in the Cities Initiative’s Industry Leaders Circle.

Date	Sponsored Activity <i>Speaking Time</i>	Amount	Comp. Tickets	Packages Available
May 6	Nexus H2O Water Innovation Showcase 5 minutes	\$7,500	2	3
May 6	Plenary Introduction 7 minutes	\$12,000	4	1
May 6	Breakout Introduction 5 minutes	\$10,000	4	2
May 6	Mayors Opening Reception (Hamilton Art Gallery) 7 minutes	\$15,000	5 (+ 5 tickets to the reception)	1
May 7	Plenary Introduction 7 minutes	\$12,000	4	2
May 7	Breakout Introduction 5 minutes	\$10,000	5	4
May 7	Keynote Luncheon 10 minutes	\$15,000	5	1
May 7	Cities Initiative Awards Dinner 10 minutes	\$15,000 (\$30,000 for branding exclusivity)	5 (+ table of 8 at Awards Dinner)	1



Branding Opportunities

Showcase your brand with high-impact visibility opportunities throughout our Annual Conference and get a special mention for your sponsored activity.

Date	Sponsored Activity <i>Speaking Time</i>	Amount	Comp. Tickets	Packages Available
May 5	Welcome Reception			
	Gold Sponsor	\$7,500	3	1
	Silver Sponsors	\$5,000	2	3
May 6	Breakfast Buffet	\$5,000	2	1
May 6	Nexus H2O Water Innovation Showcase	\$2,500	2*	3
May 6	Networking Coffee Breaks	\$5,000	2	2
May 6	Mayors Opening Reception (Hamilton Art Gallery)	\$7,500	3	3
May 7	Breakfast Buffet	\$5,000	2	1
May 7	Exhibitors Reception			
	Gold Sponsor	\$7,500	3	1
	Silver Sponsors	\$5,000	2	3
May 7	Awards Dinner	\$5,000	2	3
May 8	Tour Bus	\$10,000	4	1
All	Registration Desk	\$10,000	4	1
All	Lanyards	\$10,000	4	1
All	Conference WiFi	\$10,000	4	1
All	Phone Charging Station	\$10,000	4	1
All	Workstation	\$10,000	4	1
All	Hotel Key Cards	\$5,000	2	1
All	Simultaneous Interpretation (English-French)	\$5,000	2	5
All	Exhibitor Table	\$2,500	1	20

* Package only includes one-day Nexus H2O tickets (May 6)

**Join us in building the Fresh Coast
Economic Corridor™ and advancing
our shared journey to prosperity.
From May 6–8, 2026, the Great Lakes
and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative will
convene in Hamilton, Ontario.**



For more information please contact
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