



## **Eastern Ontario Leadership Council Communications Update Fall/Winter 2018**

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This update is part of a series regarding the recent activities and advocacy of the Eastern Ontario Leadership Council (EOLC). The intended audience includes board members, municipal councils, and staff located within Eastern Ontario, as well as any members of the EOLC's five partner organizations. To learn more about the EOLC's background and composition, visit <http://www.eolc.info>.

### **1. Composition of the EOLC Board**

The EOLC consists of five partner organizations:

[Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus](#)

[Eastern Ontario Mayors' Caucus](#)

[Eastern Ontario Regional Network](#)

[Ontario East Economic Development Commission](#)

[Community Futures Ontario East](#)

### **2. Launch of New Website and Video**

In September 2018, the EOLC launched its new website, at [www.eolc.info](http://www.eolc.info). The website will be a valuable tool for sharing information about the EOLC's activities, its three working groups, upcoming events, and the forthcoming release of the Regional Economic Development Strategy Refresh Project, in early 2019. At the same time, the website launch presented an excellent opportunity to release an updated two-minute video about the EOLC, its history and its composition. The video can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSDzNcufB1g>.

### **3. Presentation at the Ontario East Municipal Conference**

On September 13, during the annual Ontario East Municipal Conference (OEMC), the EOLC hosted a one-hour presentation to an engaged audience. The purpose of the presentation was to provide a brief overview of the EOLC's history and its recent accomplishments, in addition to a complete update on the progress of the 2018-2019 Strategy Refresh Project.

Specifically, it was highlighted that the EOLC has become a model for the Province of Ontario, both through its previous work on the Economic Development Strategy and its ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Some of the initial findings of the Strategy Refresh were also presented, including data on labour force, socio-economic trends, community issues, employment, and business.

The presentation can be viewed online at <http://www.eolc.info/en/news-and-information/resources/EOLC-Presentation-at-OEMC-September-13-2018.pdf>.

### **4. Meetings at AMO and with the Provincial Interministerial Council**

EOLC members held several significant meetings during the last few months of 2018, beginning with a presentation during the AMO Conference to Jim Wilson, the former Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. This first meeting was an opportunity for the EOLC Co-Chairs to present an overview of the collaborative work performed from March to July 2018 as part of the Strategy Refresh project, and reiterate the strengths of Eastern Ontario as a region.

Another important milestone was a first-ever meeting held between the EOLC and the Provincial Interministerial Council (PIC), a network of senior managers and directors from the Ontario Public Service from regions across the Province. The Eastern Ontario branch of the PIC was interested in learning more about the EOLC's work and, furthermore, how the eventual implementation of the Strategy Refresh could lend itself to policy decisions for the various Ministries operating in the region. The fruitful discussion has since led to additional conversations between both parties, which are eager to continue this collaboration in 2019.

## **5. Economic Development Strategy Refresh**

The EOLC continues to work closely with the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (MEDJCT) on the “refresh” of the Economic Development Strategy of 2014. Earlier this year, following numerous discussions, the Ministry and the EOLC agreed to a project that involves the refreshing of the Strategy and providing support for immediate work by the EOLC’s three Working Groups.

The EOLC engaged MDB Insight Inc. to undertake the research, consultations and writing of the Strategy Refresh, which is currently nearing completion. An interim progress report was submitted to the Ministry and a draft of the Strategy refresh has been discussed and evaluated by the EOLC board.

The refresh intends to examine new data, reports and studies since 2014, track progress on the strategy implementation, determine trends, assess the region’s performance in comparison to provincial and national levels, and analyze the findings in a final report. Some of the initial findings for Eastern Ontario are:

- While population growth is lower and our population is aging faster in comparison to the provincial average, our workforce remains strong;
- We have a strong skilled trades/college educated workforce, even given the fact that Eastern Ontario has a smaller proportion of its population with post-secondary education (51%) when compared to the province (55%);
- Eastern Ontario incomes continue to be lower than provincial medians;
- The labour force in the region has decreased by 0.8% between 2011 and 2016 whereas Ontario’s growth for the same period was 1.5%.
- Despite fewer manufacturing jobs, Eastern Ontario’s output is still growing;
- Small businesses and self-employment is above average, among businesses;
- A key concern remains workforce, whether it is the need for skilled workers, competitive wages, and worker characteristics;
- Other concerns include adequate infrastructure for broadband, cellular, and transportation, in order to capitalize on productivity, business and economic development opportunities;
- Despite these challenges, there is a feeling that Eastern Ontario is a good place to start or grow a business; 70% of survey respondents are optimistic that Eastern Ontario’s economy will be stronger in three to five years;
- The top two regional attributes that give business an advantage are our quality of life and our access to natural resources.

## **6. The EOLC Working Groups**

The EOLC employs a “working group” model to guide the board’s deliberations and offer recommendations on implementation priorities and directions. These three working groups also build broader collaborations across the region; draw on widespread expertise; provide opportunities for participation from across the region and across various sectors (e.g. private sector, post-secondary education).

All three working groups meet on a regular basis throughout the year. Each group is chaired by an EOLC member or designate, and features membership from various levels of municipal, provincial, and federal government, as well as the private sector, colleges and universities. Staff from Provincial Ministries sit as observers on the board, including the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (TCU). For more information on the Working Groups, or to become involved, please contact their respective Chairs:

- Integrated, Intelligent Transportation System – Andrew Wallen / EOCFDC
- Workforce Development and Deployment – Craig Desjardins / Kingston
- Technology Integration and Innovation – Kelly Pender / Frontenac

## **7. Looking Ahead to 2019**

The coming year promises to be busy for the EOLC, namely as the Strategy Refresh project nears completion and its public release during the first quarter of the year. The EOLC hopes to provide a first look to Minister Todd Smith – who hails from Eastern Ontario – during the ROMA Conference in late January.

Beyond that, the EOLC looks forward to working with its two Co-Chairs, each of whom will be named to the board by the EOWC and the EOMC, respectively, at their annual general meetings in early January.

The EOLC meeting schedule for 2019 has been posted online and can be viewed at <http://www.eolc.info/en/news-and-information/meeting-schedule.aspx>.

On behalf of the EOLC, happy holidays and all the best in the new year!