

Hamilton Chamber of Commerce: Backgrounder

March 5, 2012

New Board approved policy theme: **Growing Hamilton's economy through smart green infrastructure**

In the coming months, the Chamber will be working with our members through our divisions, committees and task forces to better understand the needs of our business community related to opportunities associated with green infrastructure. We will tap into our members' experience and expertise to add perspectives to discussions and decisions around policies that will foster the growth of green infrastructure and associated business opportunities.

Through this theme, the Chamber will add its voice to how Hamilton can generate economic activity from the green economy. This theme aligns with both the federal and provincial government plans to support economic growth and the City of Hamilton's Economic Development strategy.

As part of our work on this theme, we will explore questions related to ways of supporting and growing industries, companies and jobs in the smart green economy, including questions such as:

- Why and how is smart green infrastructure good for businesses and their bottom lines?
- What unique strengths does Hamilton have to create new opportunities for existing companies while fostering new business as well?
- What kinds of investments and policies are required to drive those opportunities?
- How do we assess returns on different kinds of green infrastructure investments?
- What roles need to be played and by whom?

For the Chamber, we will use this theme to shape discussions at future events including the Hamilton Economic Summit (2012 topic is "Hamilton's role in the regional economy and beyond") and through seminars and workshops such as the April 17, 2012 workshop with Sustainable Hamilton that will help businesses understand ways to improve their bottom lines through sustainable business practices. Our future communication and advocacy plans will also be informed by this new theme.

Project examples of ways that the Chamber will be building on, and further exploring this theme:

Transportation: Light Rapid Transit (LRT) – building on one of the Chamber's policy themes from 2011, the Chamber will use our recently formed LRT task force to assess how an investment in green infrastructure such as LRT can help smart land use planning (ex. Transit-oriented development), create opportunities for existing and new businesses and attract new residents to the city.

Building Technologies: The Renew Hamilton project, an output from previous Hamilton Economic Summits is cataloguing and profiling the renewal of Hamilton's built heritage in the downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods through video case studies of development projects, curriculum development to help developers, and delivering a lecture series featuring architects. Over time, we anticipate connecting the renewal projects in the downtown through corridors linking to other neighbourhoods in Hamilton (renewhamilton.ca). There are developers and companies that have adopted smart building technologies that other businesses can learn from, and we anticipate showcasing these examples through this project and others.

Energy: The Chamber has endorsed the Lake Ontario Off-Shore Network (LOON) that is led by a consortium of Hamilton and Bay-Area businesses to develop offshore wind turbines in eastern Lake Ontario. A significant number of Hamilton businesses are involved in the clean energy sector, including wind energy, and are poised to benefit from this project and potentially other developments. In the future, perhaps more Hamilton businesses could benefit from growth in the clean energy sector. In short, Hamilton has an opportunity to become a leader in the clean energy sector, especially in the manufacturing and transportation industries, providing valuable jobs to our community.

Additional background:

Infrastructure:

Infrastructure, which comes in many forms, helps support and drive economic development, job creation, competitiveness, productivity and prosperity. Infrastructure includes: **transportation** (public transit (LRT); roads, bridges, ports, airports, rail); **public institutions** (schools, hospitals, recreation facilities; cultural facilities); **water and sewer** (including servicing employment land); **brownfield re-development; fibre and wireless technology;** and **energy** (transmission lines; power generation).

Green Economy:

The green economy typically comprises four sectors: recycling and energy from waste; green building technologies; renewable energy (wind, solar, water, geothermal); and energy efficient infrastructure and transportation.