



Strategic Plan

2018 – 2022

Cambridge Chamber of Commerce
750 Hespeler Rd, Cambridge, Ontario N3H 5L8

Our Organization

Our Chamber serves over 1,600 members representing a cross-section of local businesses. Our membership includes employers ranging in sizes from 1 to 8,000 plus who provide more than 55,000 jobs in a vibrant and diverse community.

On June 16th, 2001 we opened the doors to the new “Gateway” business and visitor information centre on the southwest corner of the 401 and Hespeler Road interchange. This monumental achievement was the catalyst to building our membership, creating new opportunities for business and building the programs and events of our organization.

We offer a broad range of events and programs for our membership and we have been widely recognized as the premier networking organization in the Waterloo Region, and that our approach to programs and events makes us a noticeably different Chamber environment. We have also been the recipient of two (2) Ontario Chamber of Commerce Chair’s Awards, three (3) National and three (3) Provincial marketing Awards, and a World Chambers Award in 2011.

Our focus is on our MEMBERS, we see them not only as the backbone of our organization, but the direct connection to prosperity, and making Cambridge the best it can be.

We are the organization of ONE and serve our members and our community in the following ways;

Opportunity – There are over 300 opportunities for our members to engage their message to their customers. Print advertising, electronic media and of course the sponsorship of events or programs that will enhance the notoriety of their business and themselves. We are always committed to exposing our members as clearly and broadly as possible.

Networking – providing opportunity for our members to meet other peer businesspersons, to exchange ideas and solutions for each other. We communicate to our members that it is vital to network, create synergies amongst one another and develop long, lasting and meaningful relationships where business can prosper.

Education – We provide numerous opportunities throughout the year where small, medium and large businesses can easily and affordably gain knowledge through education from Law to Customer Service, from Accounting to Computer Training programs. Over 30 programs a year are offered for our members benefit.

Our Community

Cambridge has a very industrious past. Formerly made up of three (3) milling towns, Galt, Preston and Hespeler. In the early years the industries attracted to the area were those of textiles and shoe manufacturing. In the 80's the shift came with the closing of the textile and shoe industries and with the shift came the automotive 1- and two-tier suppliers, and the high-tech industrial operations. In fairly short order the community began to explode.

By the year 2000, Cambridge represented over 50% of the industrial tax assessment in the Region of Waterloo. Not to be overshadowed, the commercial sector took dramatic increases as well.

From the beautiful strolls along the Grand River in our downtown core to the hustle and bustle of Hespeler Road the prominence business played in growth is evident everywhere.

The Region of Waterloo

Cambridge is nestled in the southeast quadrant of the Region of Waterloo one of three large urban centres and the second largest in the region. Cambridge represents approximately one quarter of the region's population.

Strategic Plan Update Methodology

We undertook both online and individual surveys from our Membership, we spoke with Civic and Government officials as well as Board Members.

In 2018 we completed the input process; the board assembled the outline based on input and released it electronically to our membership for feedback.

The results of that process are contained in this report as adopted by the Board of Directors in November 2018.

Vision Statement

To inspire, change and lead in fostering greatness in our community and economic prosperity, to make Cambridge the most envied City to Live, Work, Play and build a business.

Mission Statement

To Our Members

The mission of the Chamber is to deliver the highest quality of service with a sense of warmth, friendliness, individual pride and community spirit to ensure that every Member feels respected, valued and appreciated.

To Our Governments

As the Voice of Business, we will listen, adapt, and cordially represent the position of our Members with integrity, sincerity, passion, a sense of warmth, friendliness, individual pride and community spirit.

To Our Staff

We are committed to providing our Employees with a work environment that offers equal opportunity for learning and personal growth. Creativity and innovation are encouraged for improving the effectiveness of all areas of the Chamber. Above all, Employees will be provided the same concern, respect and caring attitude within the organization that they are expected to share externally with every Cambridge Chamber Member.

Values Statement (VOICE)

Visionary Leadership

We will be regarded as the leader of business in our community, shaping policy, initiating collaborative partnerships and acting as the champions of prosperity. We will lead with vision, inspiration and enthusiasm.

Organizational Integrity

We will deliver measurable results for the betterment of our economy and our members. The Chamber and its members will, at all times, operate with the highest level of trust and integrity.

Innovation and Education

We will embrace innovative solutions for the enhancement of our services and, through continuous education for our members, we will advance the intellectual capabilities of our business community.

Confidence and Value

We will deliver programs and represent business with the highest levels of confidence and value. We will provide exceptional opportunities for our members to network and develop business relationships.

Engagement and Service

We will engage and respond to the needs of our members and our community, adding qualitative and quantitative value to the health and vibrancy of our community.

Strategic Initiatives

All of our initiatives must serve to maintain and enhance the reputation of our Chamber. There are 8 influences that have been identified through the Chamber 2025 Initiative from the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE).

The Cambridge Chamber's future strategies over the next 4 years will be based on these influences, preparing our way forward as an organization.

Belonging and Gathering

1. Continual efforts in finding programming that meets the needs of our ever-changing membership

- Women's programming
- Youth Leadership Programming
- Events that Inspire
- Ongoing – Staff
- Ongoing – Staff
- Ongoing – Staff

2. Investigate opportunities to bring broader community awareness

- Business to Business Radio Show partnership with the Greater KW Chamber
 - Marketing our Online Tools focus on Communication to Members and Community
 - CEO Column in Spectrum focusing on Business and Community
 - President/CEO
 - Current/Ongoing – Staff
 - President/CEO
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Communications Technology

1. Best utilization of technology for communications

- Develop an Advocacy Structure that engages all Members and develops fast turn around
 - Develop virtual Bi-Annual Survey's
 - Hire a communications expert that has social media experience
 - Develop a social media plan that intends on engaging not just members but community as well
 - Ensure the Chamber is equipped with Video, software and other tools to expand our reach into the community
- Events/Program Staff
 - Ongoing – Staff with input from Members
 - VP Marketing
 - VP Marketing
 - President/CEO
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Scarcity and Abundance

1. Prioritize Advocacy around two central areas. Labour and Talent as well as Energy Resources.

- Programs / Events around talent pool and the acquisition of a good labour force for our Members
 - Options of creating an incubator for small business spaces
 - Options for abandoning the current Visitor Service Centre and create a communal workspace for Members to rent in the 3000 sq ft visitor centre
 - Other areas to build financial sustainability
- Ongoing
 - President/CEO
 - Staff/Task Force
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Global Impacts

1. Develop a strategy to dialog, connect and work with Chambers around the world to better connect our local Members to opportunities.	President/CEO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend World Chamber's Congress• Participate in the International Council with ACCE (Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives.• Act as Delegation Leader for conferences such as Centrallia/Futurallia• Work with Waterloo Economic Development Corporation• Be active with the Innovation Corridor• Explore InterCity Visit program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing• Ongoing• Ongoing• Ongoing• Ongoing• Ongoing

Population Shifts

1. Implement a new process for Board Member composition to ensure the diversity of our community is represented in Gender, Ethnicity and Sector Representation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2019 AGM New process to be implemented to ensure diversity• Develop events that speak to inclusiveness and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board• Events/Program staff

Political and Social Fragmentation

1. Address the political discourse on social media	
• Develop educational programs on communications	• Staff
• Blogs/Op Ed's on the subject of social media discourse	• Ongoing Staff / President CEO
• Present at every opportunity to public events or political events that this has got to change	• Ongoing - Staff
2. Education on Social aspects a priority	
• Spectrum Articles	• Staff/Board/Chair
• Multi guest forums on social issues	• Events/Program Staff
• Advocacy on ethical social media communication	• Communication Staff

Resource Alignment

3. Mission = Dollars	
• Develop programs that generate more funding for core programs	• Staff
• Our Vision and Mission must be front and foremost on Website, Spectrum all publications	• Ongoing Staff / President CEO
• Every event should start with our Vision and Mission Statement	• Ongoing - Staff

Catalytic Leadership

1. Leading the Community	
• Continue supporting and providing Leadership inspiration and training	• Staff
• Blogs/Op ed's on Leadership	• Ongoing Staff / President CEO
• Present at every opportunity to public events	• Ongoing - Staff
• Communicate Leadership's importance to business	• Staff/Board/Chair
• Take on major advocacy issues (Multiplex, LRT etc)	• Events/Program Staff
• Lead on the discussions of good leadership, through social media	• Communication Staff

The work begins, this is a trajectory that no one knows the arch of. We must lead, we must stand up for those who don't have a voice to defend themselves, we must stand our ground on moral and difficult issues facing business.

Today is our tomorrow, no better time to change life and community around us, then to start right now!