



EMERGING
LEADERS

City Infrastructure

Recreation

Leisure

Our Vision

Emerging leaders is a collective of like-minded 22-44's who believe that London, Ontario, Canada, can be among North America's top ranked 21st century cities, in terms of both economic prosperity and quality of life, and intend to share ideas, experiences and action-oriented dialogue, with each other and current leaders, to help it get there...*and to have a little fun and shake things up in the process!*

Emerging Leaders seeks to:

- Facilitate **involvement** by London's 22-44 year old demographic in the larger community;
- Create a sense of **investment** by this demographic in our community; and,
- Provide a **voice** for action-oriented dialogue on issues facing **London** in the next decade, by engaging participants in a quarterly THINK TANK environment, leading to a community symposium.

Emerging Leaders gives you a voice

Emerging Leaders will host four quarterly Think Tank events, focusing on the following theme areas:

1. Attraction, retention and employment – May 2006
2. Arts, culture, community development and philanthropy – September 2006
3. City infrastructure, recreation and leisure – December 2006
4. Entrepreneurialism – creating the culture – March 2007

Questions for consideration will be provided to facilitate discussion, but participants are encouraged to tackle any topic within the theme area with one specific focus: "***how can we help improve London or make it more attractive/competitive in this area?***"

What to Expect: Emerging Leaders Think Tanks

Recognizing the power of dialogue and the cross-pollination of ideas from different people, Emerging Leaders Think Tanks will resemble the increasingly popular *conversational cafés*. Think Tanks will be designed to encourage an open, creative conversation, with the aim of identifying the issues involved while **developing creative solutions** to address them.

Participants are expected to come prepared, having read the following brief on this topic. A number of brainstorming stations will be set up utilizing various mediums (i.e. white boards, post-it walls, video corners etc) with facilitators and volunteers helping stimulate dialogue and ensuring your voice is heard. Information collected after each event will be consolidated with highlights posted to the web site immediately following each session. A more formal progress report will be posted shortly thereafter.

Come to the THINK TANK sessions with all of your ideas and positive suggestions to help build the London community. But most of all, come to these sessions ready to work! Ideas from each Think Tank will be recorded by facilitators and, within a year's time, the most promising of these ideas, as determined by the group, will be brought forward in a symposium format to the city's current business and community leaders, with the intent of facilitating action-oriented dialogue and positive evolution in the city.

City Infrastructure, Recreation and Leisure THINK TANK

In this global economy, where talent and creativity are increasingly shaping the future of economic opportunities, the 22 – 44 age group is influential and powerful. It is between these ages that individuals complete formal education, build careers, start to contribute to the community via tax dollars, and have families of their own. This age group is fast becoming the social, economic, political, and community drivers for London and will power both our metropolitan and national growth.

London has historically faced a challenge retaining, attracting and engaging the 22-44 year old demographic. This issue has been highlighted in reports like Creative Cities and London's Next Economy, available on the Emerging Leaders website at www.emergingleaders.ca/resources.htm.

Quality of life is rapidly becoming a critical factor behind a city's ability to attract and retain the younger demographic. Quality of life relates to the living environment cities create through their infrastructure (transport, housing, water, energy, and communication), urban planning, environmental stewardship, opportunities to participate in leisure and recreational activities that they offer as a service to citizens, the many social networks that they foster and the sense of belonging to a social and political community that they inspire and maintain.

Across North America, cities are developing unique and innovative ways to turn local assets into community-wide strategies for economic renewal and an improved quality of life. Progressive cities are quickly discovering that the stakes are high if they fail to address the unique needs of the younger demographic which are increasingly seen as the key to a viable economic future. Indeed Canadian cities are now facing a hard demographic reality: Cities that are unable to attract the young and talented will be suffering in a decade as baby boomers retire and the number of young adults declines.¹

There are a number of wonderful success stories of cities throughout North America that have enjoyed tremendous success at the attraction and retention game:

“From Milwaukee to Tampa Bay, consultants have been hired to score such nebulous indexes as ‘social capital’, ‘after hours,’ and ‘vitality.’ Relocation videos have begun to feature dreadlock and mosh pits instead of sunsets and duck ponds.”

From express bus routes, to commuter bike paths, to Frisbee golf courses and an entertainment express trolleys, cities are developing innovative ways to transform and develop local assets into strategies of attraction as well as an improved quality of life for its residents and visitors.

Leisure and recreation are rapidly growing contributors and indicators behind highly successful and competitive cities and their ability to attract and retain young talent. Demographers like William H. Frey from the Brookings Institutions, note that people are choosing location before finding a job.² The younger demographic tend to prefer downtown living, public transportation and plenty of entertainment options. Other research supports this finding; that quality of life and ‘livability’ are key factors in attracting young people.

“Our research has shown that the best young talent is borderless, but is attracted to the economic opportunities and quality of life in great cities...Without question, this includes economic and educational opportunities, but it equally encompasses deeper things, elements that are harder to measure. These embrace, amongst many other factors, an environment of social inclusion, vibrant cultural opportunities and inspiring public places.”

- *“Building Up. Making Canada’s cities magnets for talent and engines of development”, Canada 25, December 2002*

¹ Shaila Dewan (November 29, 2006). Cities Face Stiff Competition Over a Young, Educated Work Force. The New York Times

² Frey, W. H. (2003). Boomers and Seniors in the Suburbs: Aging Patterns in Census 2000. The Brookings Institution, Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy: University of Michigan.

Emerging Leaders: City Infrastructure, Recreation and Leisure

So, what do YOU think?

The following is a list of questions meant to spark discussion. You do not necessarily have to answer all questions and you are invited to tackle any topic under the general theme of **City Infrastructure, Recreation and Leisure**. Use any of the feedback mechanisms at the THINK TANK session to provide your input. You may also prepare your feedback ahead of time and simply submit the information in any form that makes you comfortable. Emerging Leaders is hungry for information from the demographic it represents, and we are looking forward to helping give you a voice.

Our demographic places great emphasis on quality and life and a strong city infrastructure that is vibrant and attractive; however, with growing demands on city budgets combined with diminishing revenue bases, what are some alternative ways to finance the expansion and development of our city assets?

What kinds of Leisure & Recreation opportunities interest you? What would you like to see more of?

What can London do to improve its quality of life as a tool for attraction and retention? What's working?

It is often said that a strong city brand is an important tool to maximize the visibility of a city's qualities and allow it to differentiate itself from its competitors. What differentiates London from its competitors? What should we be celebrating? What will attract the attention of our demographic?

During the last Think Tank, our demographic said that we wanted more and better ways to connect (socially and professionally). Please provide ideas and/or suggestions how we may be able to achieve this.

Balancing economic development with environmental impact is a significant challenge. Suggest ways that London can strike a balance between these two forces. What's working? What are some good ideas being applied in other communities that could work here?

How can we as a demographic facilitate greater involvement in urban planning and policy development debates and discussions? Please provide suggestions and/or ideas how we can achieve this.

Additional Comments:
