

WINDSOR-ESSEX REGIONAL Chamber of Commerce

MEDIA RELEASE

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Windsor-Essex Chamber Releases Municipal Finance & Taxation Paper

Windsor, Ontario – The Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce has released its Municipal Finance and Taxation Paper (FTP), its third comprehensive research paper since February 2013 focused on Windsor-Essex business priorities. Other released papers are the Regional Transportation Paper (RTP) and the Regional Energy Paper (REP).

The Municipal Finance and Taxation Paper was created by the Chamber's Finance and Taxation Committee chaired by Jason Ilijanic and approved by the Chamber's Board of Directors. The Finance & Taxation Committee is comprised of Chamber members with expertise in the areas of finance and taxation.

The FTP identifies the challenges and the opportunities facing the region over the medium to long-term and it provides recommendations.

One of the key findings is that some parts of the region have been experiencing declining property values and assessments while other areas are more stable. Another finding is that while the residential tax rates are trending below the provincial average, some commercial and industrial rates are trending materially higher than the provincial average. As the region moves forward over the medium to longer-term this could lead to noticeable pressure on local government tax revenue.

Reconciling a challenging environment for generating revenue with the need for a competitive business environment over the medium to longer-term is a key challenge.

The Chamber paper also contains the following key recommendations:

- The Windsor-Essex municipalities should establish a goal to reach and surpass provincial averages for all business property tax classes in order to create a more competitive business environment. The Chamber of Commerce is prepared to assist in this regard.
- The Chamber supports the City of Windsor, the Town of Tecumseh, other local municipalities and AMO in calling for reform to the outdated Ontario interest arbitration system. To this end the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce co-sponsored a resolution supporting reform of the Ontario interest arbitration system. The resolution was approved by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce membership in May 2013.
- The local governments in the Windsor-Essex region should continue to deploy additional economic development initiatives such as continuing support for small business, continuing to encourage a robust start-up and innovation culture and collaboration among stakeholders. The Chamber is also encouraging the development of more mentorship and access to capital mechanisms.
- The Chamber should take the leadership role in creating a regional economic solutions forum within the next 6-12 months.

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“The Chamber is looking forward to working with local municipalities and key community stakeholders to act on the paper’s recommendations,” said Jason Ilijanic, Chair of the Chamber’s Finance & Taxation Committee.

Ed Miles, Chair of the Board for the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber has expressed his deep appreciation and thanks to the Committee for a job well done.

“The Finance & Taxation Committee has done a tremendous job in creating this paper and we are pleased with the result. The Chamber is continuing to provide leadership on issues that our members face every day,” says Ed Miles, Chair of the Board for the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce.

To access the Chamber’s Energy Paper you can visit the Chamber’s website at:
<http://www.windsorchamber.org/about-us/policy-advocacy/>

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