Identity Building for The Waterloo Region

Expressing who we are to the world

Creative Enterprise Initiative

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Prepared for Creative Enterprise Initiative by

PAUL Consulting Inc

Foreword

The work of building a great community is endless, and the challenge to remain on top of the competitive innovation ecosystem that Waterloo Region finds itself in, is constant. There is no doubt that each year we move the needle closer and closer to being one of the best in the world, but we are not there yet. Our work is not done.

Great cities demonstrate balanced strengths - education, transit, health, economics, and governance all have to line up for success. No one can deny that Waterloo Region is on the right track. Known as, and praised for being an extraordinary hub for innovation at the cutting edge of the global economy, our Region has made significant headway toward achieving greatness. This can be attributed to our regional and municipal governments, community-minded barn-raising individuals, business leaders and the many hard-working organizations, both for-profit and not-for-profit, including those under the umbrella of the Prosperity Council of Waterloo Region.

The Council, a federation formed to collectively create an environment that supports opportunities for prosperity in Waterloo Region, is comprised of representatives of its partners: Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce; Cambridge Chamber of Commerce; Communitech; and now the Waterloo Economic Development Corporation.

The federation was designed to find effective solutions to the economic opportunities facing Waterloo Region, and to support wealth creation with the objectives of enhancing our standard of living and overall quality of life. In 2003, at a region-wide Prosperity Forum, the Council identified challenges to realizing our region's rightful place as a leading North American economy, including the competition for talent, investment and jobs worldwide, and developed an action plan on key priorities. The *Good To Great Agenda* [1] was advanced with an overall goal of raising the ambition of the community and setting the challenge, with a promise to hold ourselves accountable for at least 10 years.

Fast forward well over a decade, and it's clear that the *Good To Great Agenda* has contributed to driving Waterloo Region toward being one of the best places in the world to live, work, create and play. Major priorities such as physician recruitment, LRT, improving our health facilities, along with post-secondary institution growth and development have been tackled head on and we've seen significant success. Yet over the years as our community has grown, one persistent business challenge remains – the competition for talent.

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[1] November 2004 Waterloo Region Prosperity Council's *Moving the Economy from Good to Great* Report appendix 1

Last fall, at the FuzeNation Technology & Music Festival held in Kitchener, local entrepreneur Michael Litt, CEO of Vidyard, spoke of how the talent gap is hurting the tech sector. Vidyard, which employs 150 people, has a Chief Operating Officer who flies into Kitchener from Portland every week, and then flies home for weekends, a Global Vice-President of Sales who commutes from Seattle, a Director of Demand Generation who resides in Denver, and a Vice-President of Alliances based in Boston. Citing the need to build a talent ecosystem here that supports the next generation of companies, Litt noted that we need to make it easy for people to move to this region. And stay.

The tech sector is not alone in this business challenge. Litt, and other leaders in tech and manufacturing, as well as in the education and health sectors, agree that while all of the fore-mentioned city strengths and attributes are fundamental for talent attraction and retention, it is essential that a truly great region offer a mix of motivations. These not only include effective transit, a growing job base and relevant career prospects, but also innovative and interesting recreational opportunities and attractive physical surroundings.

Born from the Prosperity Council's *Good To Great Agenda* in 2007, Creative Enterprise Initiative (CEI) had a primary objective from inception to do just that - help make Waterloo Region a vibrant, more attractive place to entice investment and talent. In theory it was simple: build a robust arts and culture scene, and introduce some big bold creative projects that would help the world imagine Waterloo Region as one of the most appealing places in the world, and the investments, jobs and people would come. In practice, it was not as straight forward.

In 2014, after three years of operating with a focus on helping to strengthen the local arts community, CEI took pause to reflect upon its organizational strengths and challenges, as well as to review the current need for support in both the arts and business sectors. From this self-examination came two refocused priorities, one of which proposed the facilitation of creative projects to tie the Region together with innovative programming that promotes collaboration across our sectors and encourages interaction amongst our community residents.

To this end, in the fall of 2015, CEI committed to developing a Plan to inform, inspire and provide a roadmap that will encourage and contribute to an attractive personality for Waterloo Region. When CEI presented its strategy in council chambers, we used the term "placemaking" to describe our recommendations for moving forward. A term largely unheard of in our region at that time. However, throughout CEI's research and consultation process with our municipal partners, with global experts at Project for Public Spaces (PPS), as well as with the private sector and arts leaders who are eager to diversify audiences, it became apparent that CEI's Plan was beyond placemaking.

According to the 2016 *Canadian Placemaking* report [2] written by Co*Lab and supported by Cities for People (an initiative of the J.W. McConnell Foundation): Across Canada, growing numbers of placemaking initiatives are changing the landscape while increasing citizen involvement in their communities. Placemaking is being adopted by many professions and municipal governments as a new way to create and support resilient, sustainable communities.

True to form, over the past 12 months in Waterloo Region, our local municipalities have been working tirelessly to engage their residents and form neighbourhood strategies to drive placemaking and build upon their community assets with the aim of creating quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness, and wellbeing.

But there is a gap to be filled, and what CEI's community consultations have led us to understand is missing, and critically required, is the development of an overall social identity for the Region, a personality that is pertinent to who we are, and both appealing and compelling to professionals who can live anywhere in the world. An element of greater scale that will most definitely complement the placemaking work of the municipalities.

Aligned with the municipal strategies, and through significant consultation with a diverse group of advisors, CEI has developed the *Creative Intersection Plan*: to encourage technology and geography to interplay, to integrate strategy designed to attract, retain and cultivate talent; to improve networking and communication flows between innovators; and to make each Creative Intersection a memorable destination.

A key differentiator of the *Creative Intersections Plan* is that private sector partnerships are at the core of the projects. The businesses who crave solutions to their corporate challenges are central to this Plan that proposes leveraging relevant technology and manufacturing, content and infrastructure to build a permanent vibe for the Region. At the same time, by shining a spotlight on these intersections, we contribute to telling the rest of the world our Waterloo Region stories and painting a captivating picture of who we are, compelling viewers externally to look closer, capturing their attention and their interest.

In the fall of 2016, the Waterloo Economic Development Corporation (Waterloo EDC) announced its new brand identity "Waterloo EDC – Inventing the Future", with the main objective to increase awareness of the organization, and the community it represents, in the minds of international company decision makers, site selectors and other key investment intermediaries. The new tagline "inventing the future" emphasizes talent, innovation, disruption and a strong bias for action, all of which represent the strengths and brand equity of the Waterloo Region.

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[2] March 2016, *Canadian Placemaking Overview & Action* Report appendix 2

The *Creative Intersections Plan*, and the work of the municipalities around placemaking, support not only Waterloo EDC's approach, but also the philosophy of the Prosperity Council of Waterloo Region and their *Good To Great Agenda*. We believe that together we can meet the challenges set out in the Agenda, collectively sharing our findings and ideas to help prepare Waterloo Region's landscape for the global attention that is critical for its greatness.

At the conclusion of this report, you will see a recommendation that the *Creative Intersection Plan* be hosted and advanced by the Prosperity Council. We believe that the Council is the most suitable steward of the Plan given its focus on talent and investment attraction, economic development and private sector partnerships. This, along with the transfer of ownership of the Grand Social engagement platform to the Waterloo Region Tourism and Marketing Corporation in early 2016, concludes CEI's commitment to the public sector. It also sets the stage for future private/public sector partnerships.

To all of the many supporters and volunteers who believed in the Creative Enterprise Initiative and gave of your valuable time, talent and treasure to help make this Region a better place, we sincerely thank you on behalf of the Board of Directors, and especially on behalf of the community at large. You have made a big difference toward building a great community, and you have helped raised the bar. We hope that like us, you will never stop believing that Waterloo Region can become THE best place in the world to live, work, create and play.

Roger Farwell
Acting CEO and Board Member
Creative Enterprise Initiative

Deborah Currie
Director, Operations & Strategic Initiatives
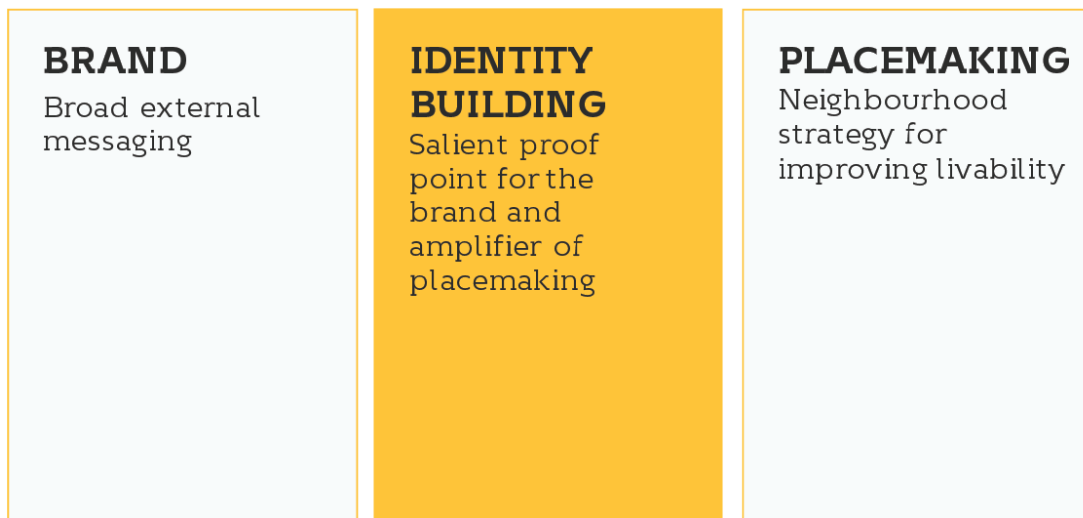Creative Enterprise Initiative

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1. Introduction

In 2014, after three years of operating with a focus on helping to strengthen the local arts community, Creative Enterprise Initiative took pause to reflect upon its organizational strengths and challenges, as well as to review the current need for support in both the arts and business sectors. From this self-examination came two refocused priorities, one of which proposed the facilitation of creative projects to tie the Region together with innovative programming that promotes collaboration across our sectors and encourages interaction amongst our community residents. This report, and associated presentations, comprise the Creative Intersections Plan.

Initially this project was seen as an exercise in traditional placemaking, however it has evolved into recommendations on how to tangibly contribute to shaping the social identity of The Waterloo Region. This approach fits neatly between existing municipal placemaking work, which often has a neighbourhood or general lifestyle improvement focus and a region wide brand strategy designed to appeal to a mobile talented workforce. The identity-building activity discussed in this report has the potential to enhance placemaking and at the same time become a powerful and highly visible asset for the regional brand.

BRAND Broad external messaging	**IDENTITY BUILDING** Salient proof point for the brand and amplifier of placemaking	**PLACEMAKING** Neighbourhood strategy for improving livability

MANDATE

This project's mandate, as given by CEI's board of directors, was to:
- Focus on activity that would attract and retain the "mobile talented workforce", which organizations within the Region have struggled to recruit.
- Explore large scale, permanent and public activity.
- Encourage all members of the Region to explore and create an authentic social identity.

- **Social Identity**   A region's social identity (the way its organizations, businesses, and population interact with each other and the outer world) is the most significant manifestation of its brand. A social identity cannot be mandated, but it can be nurtured. This project has focused on harnessing and nurturing this critical and authentic component of the community.
- **Collaborative Community Involvement**   Private sector, education institutions, government and the public itself are critical participants in creating the region's identity and vibe. A vibe, by its very definition, builds upon itself and must therefore be authentic to the community. The recommendations of this report have been designed to be flexible enough to foster this involvement while at the same time create a framework and focus that has been lacking in the past.
- **Scale**   Our recommendations, while rooted in permanent public spaces are designed to grow and include a philosophy for how businesses, institutions and the arts can overlap each other to encourage more innovative thinking and community energy. This requires big vision with bold tactics.

"Now—with the proliferation of the private auto, suburban shopping malls, numerous home entertainment offerings, spacious backyards and many other incentives for us to simply stay at home- people venture out in public because they want to rather than because they have to. That creates a new necessity to make city space pleasurable and inviting. Mediocre public spaces will be places no one bothers to visit. Great ones, however, will continue to draw people and foster a sense of urban vitality and community."

Jan Gehl *- Architect and placemaking expert. Demark*

2. Executive Summary

The Waterloo Region is operating in the very competitive and global "Innovation Economy". The Region is in the midst of building an appropriate ecosystem that supports the needs and desires of the home grown and global "mobile talented workforce" who are the engine of innovation.

A successful ecosystem supports the innovative and risk taking mobile talented workforce in three areas:

- Business and education mentoring.
- Cultural beliefs that align with a desire for enriched experiences and inspiration.
- Social norms and infrastructure that turn cultural beliefs into daily action.

The Waterloo Region ecosystem scores highly on the first point with organizations such as Communitech, the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University and Conestoga College. Cultural beliefs are also shifting within these organizations. However, the social aspect of the Region has not advanced at the same speed. This results in the perception by a majority of the mobile talented workforce that The Waterloo Region is not an inspiring place to live.

We can positively change this perception by giving the community the opportunity to learn about, **and publically celebrate**, the world-class activity taking place within the Region. This strategy is called Creative Intersections. It combines appealing traditional values such as a sense of place, belonging and continuity with a new authentic vibrancy—buzz, interaction and unexpected delight. It is both a philosophy for consciously overlapping business sectors with the community and arts, as well as a tactical approach for public infrastructure that can encourage community identity building and celebration.

Creative Intersections are permanent public spaces where the content and activity of the Region's world-class institutions can be turned into playful art installations. These installations help the community get reacquainted with itself and define a new social identity—one in which the Region's world-class activity participates in creating an energetic vibe on the streets—a place where innovators can find an inspiring lifestyle.

Imagine a Creative Intersection at Caroline and Erb Streets where artists, collaborating with physicists, create an interactive journey of an atom that spans the distance between the Perimeter Institute to Waterloo Towne Square using light, sound and sculpture. Imagine people learning, having fun and celebrating the Region's global impact.

The Creative Intersection strategy would include several of these physical locations throughout the region—each with a unique theme that is authentic to its physical area.

This approach drives success by:
- Demonstrating that the work of the mobile talented workforce is embraced and celebrated in the community.
- Helping citizens rediscover their community at a deeper, more engaging level.
- Bringing energy and a unique vibe to the streets.

Creative Intersections is a community strategy, not a government led activity.
The funding and organizational structure for this work is also a form of intersection between private and public sectors, world-class institutions, artists and corporate sponsorships. Each can be uniquely rewarded based on their unique contribution, whether that contribution be funding, content or land.

The Waterloo Region can immediately begin using the Creative Intersections strategy to shape its social identity with a pilot project in downtown Cambridge.

The Gaslight District development, owned by Hip Developments, is willing to explore including the Creative Intersection strategy into their plans.

The Waterloo Region can become a place where innovation is encouraged, mentored, funded and publically celebrated. The Region can become a true home to innovation.

3. Vision

The North American economy is quickly transforming into a structure that relies on innovation to compete globally. Innovation requires a supportive "ecosystem" to flourish.

This type of ecosystem values:
- A blending of ideas, industries, expertise, strategy and production.
- The mobile talented workforce who boldly lead and have an interconnected global view of business and life.
- Speed in decision making and action.

The regions that will prosper are the ones that attract and support the mobile talented workforce in three areas:
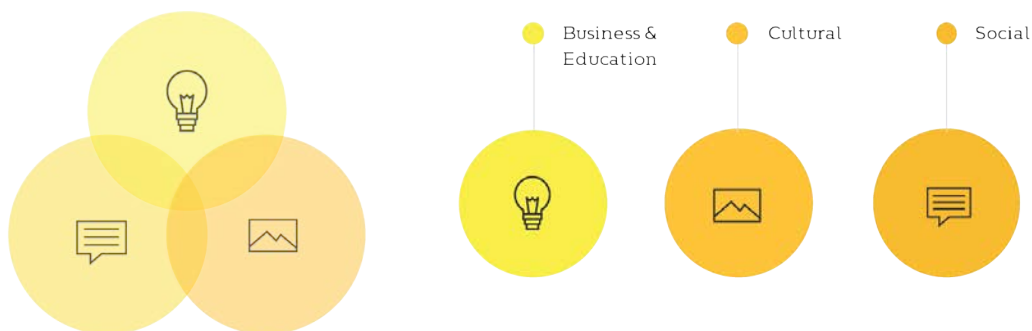
- **Business & Education** Financial, mentoring and infrastructure support for risk taking.
- **Cultural** Values, priorities and beliefs that align with the mobile talented workforce desire for enriched experiences and inspiration.
- **Social** The norms and structures that influence social behavior in a way that appeals to the mobile talented workforce's tendency to see work and life in an interconnected fashion.

"The Future Ages Quickly."
...A Silicon Valley saying.

The shift to innovation ecosystems is happening fast. There are already winners such as Austin Texas, Portland Oregon, and the Raleigh/Durham area of North Carolina to name a few. In fact, according to Antoine van Agtmael and Fred Bakker, authors of "The Smartest Places On Earth", there are 35 "Brainbelt" communities in North America, smaller than Austin that are competing for the same world-class talent as Waterloo Region. That competition is going to continue to grow.

So where do we stand, and more importantly, what can we become in this highly competitive arena?

Waterloo Region has successfully built a unique business support structure for innovation. Within that structure, many organizations contain the values that are creating a supportive cultural environment. They are creating experiences where there is less concern about work life balance. This aligns with the talent the Region needs and their desire for work and life to inspire equally.

However, the greater region-wide community and its social behavior remain separate from the innovation ecosystem. Currently the ideal supportive culture does not manifest itself outside the business sector in a strong public way, causing an **external perception of a community that lacks a cohesive and interconnected identity. This limits the ability to attract talent and economic growth.**

 "Attracting world class talent is critical to the success of the regional tech community. The competition for this talent is increasing both from local and international companies. It's not enough to offer inspiring and exciting jobs here. To compete for the world's best talent, we need to offer an equally inspiring community."

Heather Galt – *VP Talent Initiative, Communitech*

The Mobile Talented Workforce

The audience the Region seeks to retain and attract is the "mobile talented workforce". This term comes from global city and culture thought leader Charles Landry.

The mobile talented workforce is not a demographic bound by age – it is a psychographic, or a point of view and attitude.

This group has either contributed to, or has been raised within, the globalization movement. Their view of the world, business, entertainment and culture is best summed up as "interconnected". They are interested in creating ideas that are bigger than national borders. They want to work for companies with global vision. At a personal level, they seek variety in a broad and connected context.

*Over the last two decades the urban experience has been defined by the globalization view. The mobile talented workforce, tied closely to that view, seek strong signs of that urban experience when considering where they will live. Their drive for true diversity pushes them beyond the idea of multiculturalism towards "inter-culturalism". **In the former, differences are acknowledged and even celebrated, but that can still lead to parallel lives. In the latter, communities ask themselves "what do we share and what can we do together".***

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The next step forward.

Our next step to building a winning innovation ecosystem involves changing the external **perception** that Waterloo Region is not an inspiring community in which to live. First, we must acknowledge that the best talent can live almost anywhere they like. Their desire for inspiring work **and inspiring lifestyles** is very real. While they may see inspiring work in the Region, many feel the lifestyle is on the other end of the continuum.

Waterloo Region was described as a "community of contradictions" by blogger and new resident Conway Fraser. It was meant as, and is, a complement. But the dual interpretations of that term highlight both the challenge and opportunity facing the Region.

Diversity in a community without "social bridges" to interconnect them often leads to polarization. That form of diversity can be seen as dysfunctional and creates a tension that the mobile talented workforce is wary of. By focusing on closing this gap, and releasing the tension, we can unleash more innovation potential and define ourselves as globally unique.

This can be done. We are closer than we think.

Waterloo Region is home to world-class minds, institutions and innovative businesses. However, the talent and content are behind doors– rarely integrated into the fabric of daily life. Examples include the University of Waterloo, CIGI, Perimeter Institute, Google, Communitech, Vidyard, Thalmic Labs, KPL, UW School of Architecture, Conestoga College, Christie Digital, WLU, Idea Exchange, UW School of Architecture, The Jazz Room...and on and on.

It is clear that interesting activity and content is not the problem. Public space is not the problem. The next step forward is to overcome the physical and "communication" barriers between our world-class institutions and our daily lives. We have yet to give these organizations the full ability to contribute to the daily vibe of the community. We have assumed that things done inside our world-class groups can't be done in public and that the population can't have fun or be inspired by what happens at Perimeter Institute or Communitech etc.

By building on our heritage and adopting a new "community creed" we can develop a vision and strategy for physical and thematic approaches for identity building for the Region.

We Make

We have always been industrious makers. This ability to produce the tangible is one of our differentiators today.

We Innovate

Innovation is a critical part of our heritage but it is now it is even more heightened as we compete in the innovation economy.

We Celebrate

It is time to add the social component and become the well rounded community innovators desire.

A place where the work of innovators is embraced in all aspects of the community.

By choosing to publically celebrate the world-class activity within Waterloo Region, we can change external perceptions by engaging two audiences:

Mobile talented workforce

- In a tangible and relevant way – demonstrate that Waterloo Region is a dynamic community in which to work and live.
- Demonstrate that the work of the mobile talented workforce will be embraced and celebrated in the community.

All the citizens of Waterloo Region

- Help citizens rediscover their community at a deeper, more engaging level.
- Bring energy and a unique vibe to the streets.

We can become a true **home for innovation**. A place where innovation is not only encouraged, mentored and funded but also **publically celebrated**.

4. Strategy

Creative Intersections – Encouraging Identity and Vibe

As stated earlier, the Region has a broad continuum of citizens and experiences, ranging between people from all over the world who are developing world class advancements to more traditional experiences held by people with deep generational roots to the area.
This "community of contrasts" has the potential to create parallel lives, which would severely limit the Region's path forward.

However, if we can strategically relieve this tension, we can turn the energy into creating a very unique identity-building project that can transform the Region and its external value proposition.

We call the tension-breaking device "Creative Intersections" which combines appealing traditional values such as a sense of place, belonging and continuity with a new authentic vibrancy – buzz, interaction and unexpected delight. It is a strategy for tactical public and geographic identity-building programs, as well as a philosophy for how tech, education, advanced manufacturing and the arts can consciously overlap and nurture innovation.

When considering the scope and power of the Creative Intersections strategy, we can think of it in two ways:

- A philosophy for organizing our business, education, arts and social sectors in a more fluid fashion.
- A tactical approach to physical and public experiences.
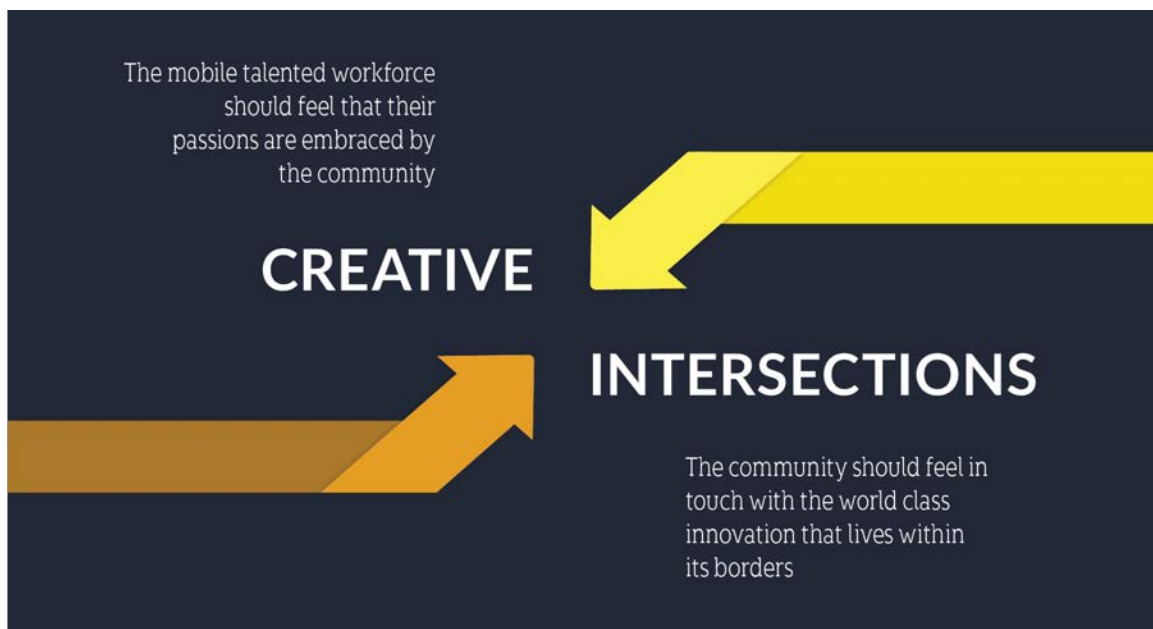
This approach already exists on an intimate scale within some areas of the Region. For example, The Perimeter Institute's seminar series and public programs are popular and often sell out. Also, yearly "open house" days at educational institutions are popular.

Creative Intersections objective is to **elevate and illuminate this intent to a level that is very publicly noticeable to the outside world** and helps form the core of a region-wide identity that reflects who we are today and who we want to become.

Creative Intersections as tangible and tactile public experiences.

The most salient example of Creative Intersections, and the focus of this report, is how they manifest themselves in public spaces. *In this form, Creative Intersections are comprised of four elements:*

- Space and place
- Engaging productions
- Curated content
- Private and public partnerships

SPACE AND PLACE

Creative Intersections are physical spaces that help define and anchor Waterloo Region. They are areas such as the proposed Victoria/King transit hub, the Grand River area in downtown Cambridge, Caroline and Erb Streets in Waterloo etc. These are places that have geographic, cultural or historical importance and have the potential to become permanent places to gather, get to know our community and each other.

ENGAGING PRODUCTIONS

Creative Intersections transform our world class content into animated entertainment via collaborations between the community's organizations and installation artists. The result allows the public to play with, learn about and celebrate what is making the Region unique. It is worth stressing that while Creative Intersections is certainly about learning, most importantly it is about fun and celebration.

Content		Artistic transformation		Entertainment and celebration
World class innovative content and ideas	→	Filtered through engaging artistic expression	→	Fun, inspiring activity for the public to play with

We can look to Montreal for an example of this activity in action. In the downtown core, as part of Université du Québec à Montréal's Science Faculty collaborated with installation artists to create musical illuminated swings. Each swing plays the sound of an instrument. Musical notes change based on the height of someone's swinging motion and speed. The swings stretch along a city block and together people randomly compose music.

The result: a destination that is always busy, fun, and engaging. Embedded in this fun is the university's ability to share knowledge and experience with the community, and as a result, the community's opportunity to celebrate the institution.
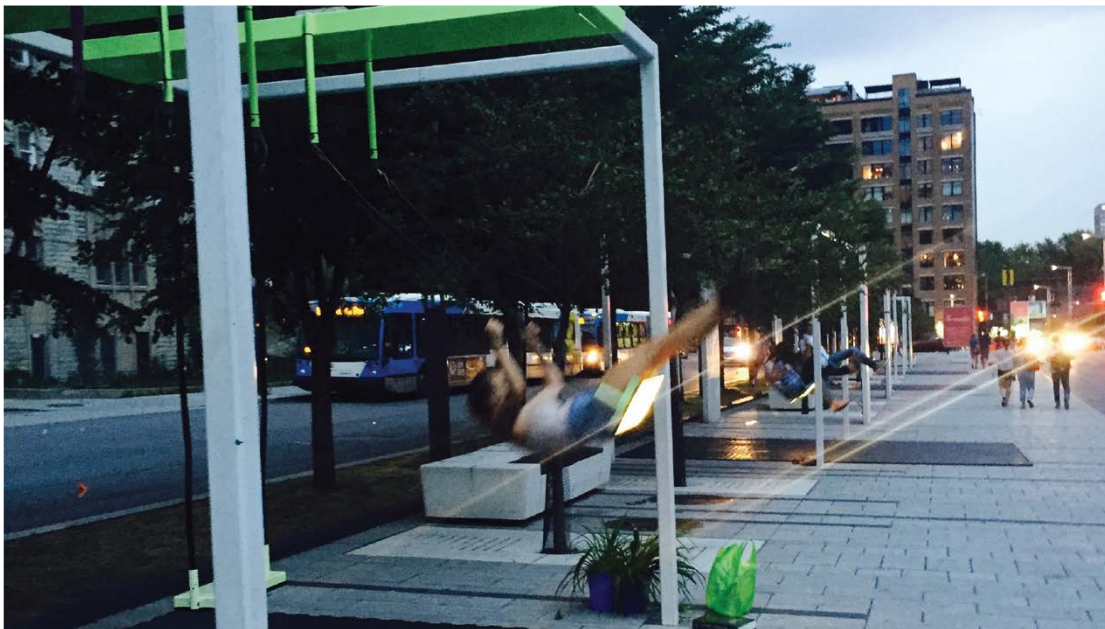
Imagine a Creative Intersection at Caroline and Erb Streets in Waterloo where artists, collaborating with physicists, create an interactive journey of an atom that spans the distance between the Perimeter Institute to Waterloo Towne Square using light, sound and sculpture. Imagine people learning, having fun and celebrating the Region's global impact.

CURATED CONTENT

Creative Intersections are a 365-day-a-year program in a **permanent location** that curates content and activities to match the rhythm of the community. They do not focus on a single activity. *Instead, they contain multiple forms of engagement ranging from:*
  * Interactive activities
  * Quiet places to sit, rest and observe
  * Activities that reflect the changing seasons
  * Special events
  * Evening lighting
  * Animated sensory features such as water and sounds

The content is curated in an evolving fashion. There are busy times and quiet times throughout the year. But there is always something engaging to do. Creative Intersections are never empty.

Imagine Christie Digital working with Thalmic Labs to create a light show along the Grand River in downtown Cambridge in which the public can "conduct" the lights with Thalmic technology on their arms to match music created by local musicians. In this scenario, there can be many forms of engagement from experiencing the light, the sounds of water and music blended together, the opportunity to dance on public stages or simply to sit in cafes, observe, learn and celebrate our world class technology. The river becomes a metaphorical intersection rather than literal. It is a place where nature, art and world-class technology flow together to create a celebration of what Waterloo Region has truly become.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS

The ways in which Creative Intersections are conceived and funded reflect the core principle of collaboration and the intersecting of ideas, aspirations and expertise. It requires an organic involvement of unique partners who can add relevant value and content to the location. In return, each partner receives unique value for their participation.

Partners	World Class Organizations	Government – all levels	Local Private Enterprise	Brands	Installation Artists
Value Given	• Content • Funding	• Content • Property • Legislation support • Funding	• Funding • Property • Content	• Funding	• Creative expertise • Production execution
Value Received	• Local promotion • Community connection • Recruiting support • New and unique content for global promotion	• Stronger tax base • Sustainable economic ecosystem • Healthy social community	• Vibrant pedestrian traffic for business • Increased property value • New network of business partners	• Promotional opportunity • Social media content • Consumer market interaction • Social goodwill	• Funding • Unique content to use as inspiration • Global audience

The initiation of a Creative Intersection can be started by any of these partners. For example, a local developer may have a unique property in need of traffic. It may be the developer that begins a discussion with a world-class organization down the street. From there a concept, further partnerships and appropriate funding models can form. In another case, a level of government may be an initiator for other reasons.

This organic model ensures that each Creative Intersection has a unique theme that is true to the area and has a sustainable form of partnership participation.

A Word About Vibe.

The ultimate goal of Creative Intersections is to reintroduce the community to itself in a way that will encourage a unique and tangible vibe on the streets of Waterloo Region. Vibe starts authentically and builds through authentic participation from **all aspects of the community.**

Creative Intersections does not prescribe an identity or vibe. It creates a framework for the community to define and publically express itself in an authentic way. In fact, each Creative Intersection will develop its own sub uniqueness. The energy and expression within each Intersection will vibrate beyond its physical borders to create a unified community identity.

LIST OF POTENTIAL CREATIVE INTERSECTIONS

The following are potential locations for Creative Intersections within Waterloo Region:

- University Avenue, Waterloo - the corridor from the Conestoga Parkway up to Westmount Road, including Conestoga College, Wilfrid Laurier University, University of Waterloo, expanding over to the Research and Technology Park, the Accelerator Centre and the Idea Ouarter at Phillip and Columbia Streets
- Erb Street & Caroline Street, Waterloo
- King Street & Victoria Street, Kitchener – Transit Hub
- RARE Charitable Research Reserve, Cambridge
- Downtown Cambridge including the Grand River, School of Architecture and the Gaslight District.
- Hwy 401 & Hwy 8 – Gateway into Waterloo Region
- Civic District, Kitchener – area bordered by Queen Street, Lancaster Street, Frederick Street and Weber Street, Kitchener
- Hespeler, Cambridge – Main Street and the Grand River
- LRT stops

5. IMAGINE

Creative Intersections Concept Model

To help bring the Creative Intersection framework to life, we have developed a concept model partnering with The Gaslight District project and HIP Developments.

INTRODUCTION

The following conceptually outlines ideas for a pilot Creative Intersection in Downtown Cambridge and The Gaslight District. The ideas here are illustrative and are only meant to show how Creative Intersections can work to bring the community into contact with the Region's world-class institutions and content. This is not final recommendation. Any actual project should include contracting the talents of public installation artists such as "Daily Tous Les Jours" in Montreal.

EXISTING STRUCTURE

The Gaslight District plans, and larger downtown Cambridge geographic location, provide us with a head start for a Creative Intersection pilot program. It contains:

- A blended development of public spaces, cafes, retail and entertainment.
- Mixture of new and old office and residential architecture.
- Nature in the form of the Grand River and adjoining walking trails.
- Home to innovative and world-class organizations including the University of Waterloo School of Architecture, Conestoga College, Dunfield Theatre, Idea|Exchange and Grand Innovations.

This solid base quickly provides one of the key foundations for a Creative Intersection – curated content. Creative Intersections are a 365-day a year program in a **permanent location** that curates content and activities to inspire creativity and match the rhythm of the community. They do not focus on a single activity. *Instead, Creative Intersections contain multiple forms of engagement ranging from:*

- Interactive activities
- Quiet places to sit, rest and observe
- Activities that reflect the changing seasons
- Special events
- Evening lighting
- Animated sensory features such as water and sounds

PARTNERSHIP

The Gaslight District project also aligns with the Creative Intersections approach to private and public partnerships. The ways in which Creative Intersections are conceived and funded reflect a belief in collaboration and the intersecting of ideas, aspirations and expertise. It requires an organic involvement of unique partners who can add relevant value and content to the location. In return, each partner receives unique value for their participation.

Already in place is a collaborative structure between the City of Cambridge, HIP Developments, Grand Innovations and Conestoga College. The next step is to create a framework in which other organizations such as the School of Architecture and Idea|Exchange can participate by contributing world-class content.

THEME

In this pilot model, we are presenting a Creative Intersection concept that offers ways for the public to engage, both day and night, with multiple regional world-class content providers all under one theme.

Downtown Cambridge is the one area within Waterloo Region in which the Grand River takes centre stage. Throughout the history of literature and the arts, rivers have been used as a metaphor for life. Rivers figure prominently in all forms of creative expression as we attempt to make sense of, and give shape to, the chaotic world around us.

In Downtown Cambridge, we will create a Creative Intersection that connects the community to creative expression by metaphorically and literally using the river to represent and celebrate life.

CREATIVE EXPRESSION

The downtown Cambridge Creative Intersection is broken into three expressive "journeys". Each journey, or river, connects the farther reaches of downtown Cambridge to The Gaslight District – areas such as Queens Square, Parkhill bridge and Water Street.

Journey One:
THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

LOCATION

The Grand River bridges and riverbanks.

In the evening the river itself becomes a journey of light, words and conversation. From the Parkhill Road bridge down to the Concession Street bridge, the banks of the Grand River will be illuminated with coloured lights projecting from both riverbanks. These changing coloured patterns, inspired by the motion of water, also illuminate the surface of the river – creating a living piece of art. They flow north and south on the river and harmonize with the river's natural motion.

This light show forms the foundation for a conversation along the river.

Starting with words from literature (supplied by Idea|Exchange), thoughts are projected on to the concrete walled banks, buildings and the river itself. These thoughts draw upon literatures long history of using the river as a metaphor to describe and understand life.

Quote examples:

> "For Life and death are one even as the river and the sea are one."
>
> "So be aware of the good and the bad. But most of all enjoy the ride, because life is like a river."
>
> "No man ever steps in the same river twice for it's not the same river and he's not the same man."

The quotes build into thoughtful and inspiring themes, expressing the best we can be as humans and communities. These themes can change to suit events, seasons or even days of the week.

An additional interactive layer is created when the community is invited to add their own thoughts and words through a mobile app on their phone. ***This app will vet contributions for public appropriateness and will also allow the public to:***
- Build upon the quotes from literature and advance the Stream of Consciousness.
- Physically carry on conversations from one side of the river to the other by choosing where a thought will be projected. (Imagine a marriage proposal taking place across the riverbanks.)
- Witness each evening's curated conversation on their phones regardless of whether they are physically at the river.

This activity creates the opportunity for Idea|Exchange, local software developers within Grand Innovations, and potentially Thalmic Labs or Christie Digital to participate in the Creative Intersection theme.

THE DREAMING RIVER

LOCATION

The Gaslight District's collaborative artist in residence space, the public space of Gaslight Square and connecting to the Cambridge Sculpture Garden.

Woven through these spaces is a Living Architecture installation created by the School of Architecture's Philip Beesley. Living Architecture creates a constantly-changing canopy of recycled textiles that induce vast forces where brilliant bursts of light alternate with dark, surging movements and intense waves of hypnotic sound.

This art installation will create the shape of a winding, flowing river above people's heads. It weaves inside and outside of buildings and under a covered roof into the sculpture garden area. Visitors to Gaslight Square can look up, imagine themselves in a living river, connect to their own imaginations and dreams.

The Dreaming River allows the community to see and experience the world-class talent of The School of Architecture and, in a very tangible way, the School contributes to the public vibe of the Region.

Journey Three:
## RIVER DANCING

LOCATION

Gaslight Square, Melville Street, Grand Avenue and the new Cambridge Pedestrian Bridge.

The River Dancing concept creates an outdoor day and evening installation. River Dancing turns a portion of Gaslight Square, and the streets leading to it, into an exploratory dance floor. It is a play area and fabric art exhibit all in one where participants take part in a collective dance that follows the flow of a river.

Embedded into the sidewalks of Melville Street, Grand Avenue, as well as the new pedestrian bridge from Water Street, will be a metallic flowing path depicting aerial view patterns of a river.
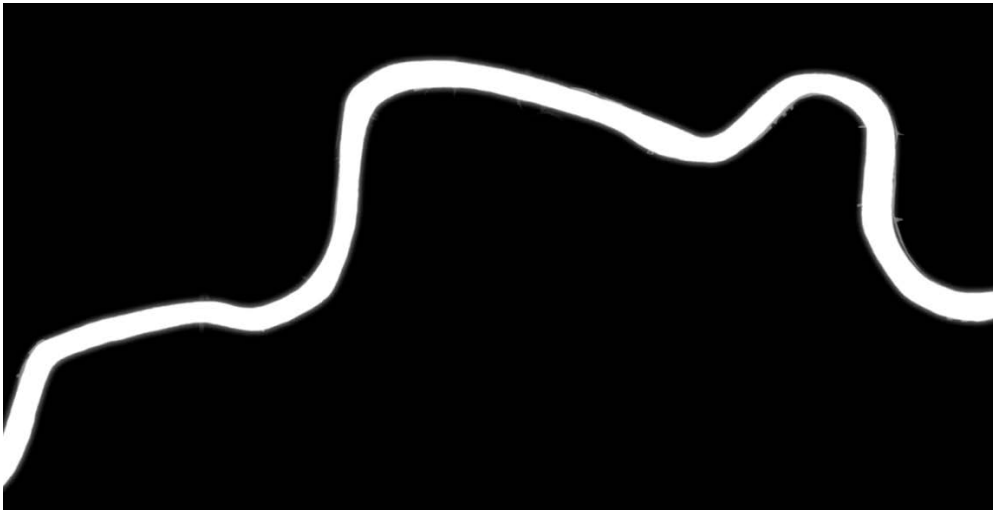
Within the rivers are "river stones" that emit music when stepped upon and also provide simple choreography instructions. Pedestrians and their children are encouraged to lightly stroll and playfully dance with the shape of the river as they approach Gaslight Square.
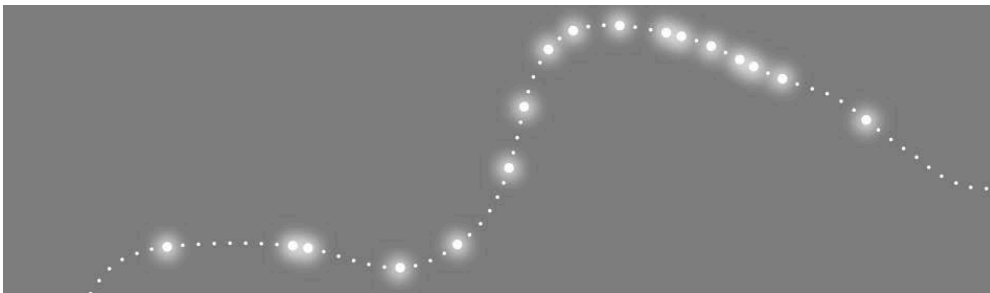
Within Gaslight Square, a circular flowing river shape is built into the pavement. Once again river stones provide music and instruction. Unique to the square area – the river and stones also light up in the evening based on touch and motion.

Also unique to Gaslight Square are fabric art displays that curve in parallel with the river design. Fabric and textile art reproductions are placed into curved sheets of clear plexi-glass that create artistic shapes for people to walk and dance around.

The Grand River once powered textile mills that created various forms of fabric and clothing. Today fabric art is a unique form of creative expression, and because of the soft nature of fabric, it is a canvas that can bend and flow – just like a river.

The Idea|Exchange is home to the Fabric Art Collection and Waterloo Region is home to innovative textile artist Jane Hamilton. www.janehamilton.ca

This journey allows the community to play, dance, laugh and enjoy a public walk. It also brings the community into contact with nationally recognized regional artists and works within the Fabric Art Collection of Idea|Exchange.

6. Tools

The following are a list of resources and examples to inspire and help in a pilot execution.

- **The Illuminated River. City of London's Thames River project**
  http://illuminatedriver.london/
- **Quartier Des Spectacles – Montreal.**
  http://www.quartierdesspectacles.com/en/activity/?gclid=CjwKEAiA7ejCBRDlp8uF6ezPnjoSJAAPED7MSUSGeCNGMyYDjOSECaXCFzuwhj022IG0JOLvBxo12BoCHQvw_wcB
- **Living Architecture from UW School of Architecture**
  https://uwaterloo.ca/architecture/faculty-project-gallery
- **Installation Artist company "Daily tous les jours"**
  http://www.dailytouslesjours.com/about/
- **Public choreography and placemaking example**
  http://www.dailytouslesjours.com/project/choreographies-pour-des-humains-et-des-etoiles/
- **Public placemaking and installation art consultants** http://www.creos.io/fr
  Beniot Lemieux benoit.lemieux@creos.io

7. Inspiration

We all need a little help when it comes to imagining things that do not exist. A fancy word for that help is—inspiration. This section provides examples of work and ideas that illustrate how cities, large and small, have used public spaces and installation art to "set the table" for com-munities to create their own unique identities. These examples are simply meant to help illustrate the power of interactivity, the importance of scale and possibility of what can be done.

START YOUR INSPIRATION JOURNEY WITH A SHORT TED TALK BY
PUBLIC INSTALLATION ARTIST JEN LEWIN:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PENUoKd5Feo

PLAYHOUSE SQUARE – Cleveland

The city of Cleveland faced the challenge of encouraging community identity and "vibe". "The job was to create a unique theatre district, and after touring the historic theaters, the big idea became clear to me: We needed to bring the inside out," says Danny Barnycz of The Barnycz Group. "All of the theatres were gorgeously restored to a high level and I wanted to recreate this feeling on the outside."
https://segd.org/playhouse-square-placemaking-and-digital-experience

COLLEGE FACES – New Haven

The faces of 350 students, teachers and administrators at Gateway Community College in New Haven Connecticut appear every 30 seconds as a slow-motion video sequence on a large 11 x 11 meter low-resolution LED video screen, viewable both inside the lobby and to the street. Individual faces are accessed and are controlled via a smartphone or website. This project challenges notions of the public and private presentation of images, while demonstrating that Gateway Community College is an important and forward-looking educational institution.
https://www.codaworx.com/project/gateway-community-college

21 OBSTACLES – Montreal

A monumental game animated by 21 swings and the public. Inspired by legendary pinball machines, 21 Obstacles is an architectural video projection that turns a building's facade into a giant video game. The movement of the swings directs the actions of the obstacles. Passersby join the game with their cell phone, by texting an indicated keyword to launch a ball into the melee. http://www.dailytouslesjours.com/project/21-obstacles/

DOWNTOWN CONTAINER PARK – Las Vegas

The Downtown Container Park is a family-friendly outdoor shopping, dining and entertainment attraction. Made completely of shipping containers stacked upon each other, this unique venue offers a variety of unique boutique shops and food outlets. There is a kid's play area with a 30 foot slide and water area in the middle of this urban destination.

MARKET SQUARE PUBLIC ART – Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh's new **Market Square Public Art Program** kicked off its three-year plan to exhibit temporary public art with *Congregation*, an interactive kinetic video and sound installation. The piece featured a 50-square-foot projection of geometric shapes into the Market Square courtyard, which responded to and interacted with the movements of passersby.

8. Conclusion

Waterloo Region has always been a community of makers and innovators. It is time to add the social component and become the well-rounded community the mobile talented workforce desires. We can become a place where innovators can find an inspiring lifestyle as well as inspiring work. That lifestyle will be one in which people embrace and celebrate the world class thinking that takes place within its borders.

Creative Intersections provides a framework to nurture an identity for Waterloo Region expressing that we are a true and welcoming home for innovation.

9. Recommendations

CEI's mandate to help make Waterloo Region a better, more attractive place to entice investment and talent was originally tasked by the Prosperity Council of Waterloo Region. With CEI's operations ceasing in 2017, the Board of Directors recommend transferring the Creative Intersections Plan to the Council for continued stewardship and oversight. The work associated with the Plan will be facilitated by the Council, but not necessarily executed or funded by the Council.

1. The Prosperity Council of Waterloo Region should be the steward of the Creative Intersections Plan and:
    - develop an effective communications strategy for the overall Plan that ties back to the Good To Great Agenda
    - consistently communicate this messaging across their memberships and to the community at large through a variety of means (to be determined)
    - research opportunities around specific intersections/projects and bring together potential partners (funders, technology, municipal, institutions etc.)
    - facilitate the process of developing individual project plans
    - appoint representatives to observe the planning and execution of projects (for messaging/storytelling purposes)
    - develop a strategy for collaborating with the Federal and Provincial Government to see more funding come into the Region for Creative Intersection projects and infrastructure

2. In partnership with the area Municipalities, the Region of Waterloo and CEI, the Prosperity Council of Waterloo Region should host an event, or series of events and/or workshops, to effectively disseminate information about the Creative Intersections Plan, as well as municipal placemaking and neighbourhood strategies, across the Region that will:
    - highlight the Creative Intersections Plan, illustrating its alignment to the work of the municipalities and differentiating it from neighbourhood strategies
    - engage key stakeholders who will be integral partners in the development of the Creative Intersections projects
    - introduce the Creative Intersections pilot project
    - provide the municipalities an opportunity to collectively share findings, ideas and strategies around placemaking and present information to the public on their individual policies

As previously mentioned, placemaking is relatively new to the general residents of Waterloo Region, so an introduction to the movement by global experts Projects for Public Spaces (PPS) would be extremely beneficial to setting the stage for further engagement by the municipalities.

3. The Prosperity Council of Waterloo Region should conduct deeper research and evaluation on the current day talent attraction and retention challenges in Waterloo Region through the establishment of a task force to:
   - review the 2012 *Waterloo Region Creative Talent Strategy* [3] initiated by a Talent Collaborative Partnership including the Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo, The Region of Waterloo, Communitech and CTT to determine outcomes from the recommendations (if any), results and relevance to current day challenges
   - understand existing talent attraction strategies being used at organizations/institutions in Waterloo Region
   - survey a spectrum of companies and institutions in Waterloo Region to invite feedback around their talent attraction/retention challenges specific to this community, and build upon the 2012 Strategy ensuring action items are relevant to today's business and tech sector

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[3] December 2012 *Waterloo Region Creative Talent Strategy* Report appendix 3

10. Acknowledgements

The Creative Intersections Advisory Committee was formed to help guide the direction of the Plan, and advocate for its eventual implementation. For this, a group of highly engaged best minds and creative thinkers was assembled, representing key community stakeholders. The advisory committee was selected by the Acting CEO with input from the CEI board of directors, and included creative and artistic directors, tech and business community leaders, influencers from key anchor institutions and representatives from the Municipalities and the Region.

Further to the work of the Creative Intersections Advisory Committee, CEI engaged in a peer review process, subjecting CEI's work, research, and ideas to the scrutiny of experts in a similar field before finalizing this Plan. The following listing includes all of those affiliated in some way with the development of the Creative Intersections Plan:

Tim Anderson	*CAO, City of Waterloo and Board of Directors - CEI*
Cory Bluhm	*Manager, Downtown Development – City of Kitchener*
Dave Bush	*Deputy City Manager, City of Kitchener and Board of Directors - CEI*
Deborah Currie	*Director, Operations & Strategic Initiatives – CEI*
Mark Dykstra	*Commissioner, Community Services – City of Waterloo*
Mark Derro	*Director, Program Development and Innovation - Conestoga College*
Tim Ellis	*Lead, Grand Innovations and Board of Directors (Vice Chair) - CEI*
Roger Farwell	*Architect – WalterFedy and Acting CEO/Board of Directors – CEI*
James Goodram	*Director, Economic Development – City of Cambridge*
Kate Hagerman	*Cultural Heritage Specialist – Region of Waterloo*
Rick Haldenby	*Former Director, University of Waterloo School of Architecture, and Researcher*
Paul Kalbfleisch	*Creative Intersections Plan Lead - CEI Consultant*
Carol Leaman	*CEO - Axonify*
David Marskell	*CEO - THEMUSEUM*
Dan Mathers	*Chairman & Co-Founder, eleven-x MaRSDD and Board of Directors - CEI*
Jeff MacIntyre	*Founding Partner, Grappleworks and Board of Directors (Chair) - CEI*
Kelly McManus	*Sr. Director, Community Relations & Events – University of Waterloo*
Trevor McWilliams	*Business Liaison Office, City of Cambridge*
Mary Misner	*Former Director, Cambridge Galleries and Board of Directors - CEI*
Mike Murray	*CAO, Region of Waterloo and Board of Directors - CEI*
Alex Mustakas	*Artistic Director and CEO, Drayton Entertainment*
Stephen Preece	*Academic Director, Schlegel Centre for Entrepreneurship & Social Innovation – Wilfrid Laurier University	Founder and Executive Producer – The Jazz Room*
Jody Schnarr	*CEO – Fibrenetics*
Jeff Willmer	*CAO, City of Kitchener and Board of Directors - CEI*