

**For Immediate Release**  
Friday, March 24, 2017



**CITY AND WDBIA INVITED TO PRESENT AT EDUCATIONAL FORUM**

The City of Welland and Welland Downtown Business Improvement Association (WDBIA) are heading to Huntsville for the 2017 Parks and Recreation Ontario Educational Forum from March 28 – 31. The City's Community Development Coordinator, Sarah Ane, along with WDBIA's Executive Director, Stephanie Hicks, are joint presenters at the Forum. Ane and Hicks were invited to present to the conference's attendees on the socio-economic benefits of public-private partnerships.

The City and WDBIA began a partnership in 2016 when the municipality and downtown organization joined resources to host the Canada Day celebrations in the downtown core. The partnership blossomed to other projects, and initiated a relationship based on similar community goals. As presenters, Ane and Hicks will promote a partnership framework and the advantages of municipalities collaborating with the private community.

Sarah Ane, City of Welland Community Development Coordinator, says that partnering with the WDBIA has introduced a new vibrancy in the downtown core and helped to engage residential and business communities. "We want to highlight the positive relationship we are building with the Downtown BIA and the incredible things we have been able to accomplish together. We're proud to be sharing this expanding relationship with municipalities across the province, and hope they will look at it as a model of what the recreation and business communities can accomplish together," said Ane.

Stephanie Hicks, WDBIA Executive Director, is excited to set an example and demonstrate a successful community partnership model. "We are beaming with excitement to be able to share our journey alongside our municipality, and lead the way in showing other municipalities that great things can occur when you work and build together by leveraging each other's strengths for the good of the community," said Hicks.

This year's Canada Day will highlight Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> events, and continue to be hosted in the downtown core. The City of Welland and WDBIA have a list of other projects that are sure to entertain families and can be found at [welland.ca](http://welland.ca) or [downtownwelland.ca](http://downtownwelland.ca).

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