THE BRAMPTONIAN

BRAMPTON BOARD OF TRADE

Issue 2 2026



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A message from

JAIPAUL MASSEY-SINGH

CEO, Brampton Board of Trade



Every conversation I have with a business owner, entrepreneur, or community leader seems to begin the same way: the challenges are real, but so are the opportunities.

Over the past year, I've had the privilege of visiting businesses across Brampton—from manufacturers investing in new technology and logistics companies expanding their operations, to start-ups bringing fresh ideas to market and family businesses that have been the backbone of our community for generations. While no two stories are exactly alike, there is a common thread running through all of them. There is a determination not simply to weather change, but to find opportunity within it.

The business environment continues to evolve at an extraordinary pace. Global trade relationships are shifting. Artificial intelligence is beginning to reshape how work gets done. Population growth is creating both tremendous opportunities and increasing pressure on housing, transportation, and public infrastructure.

Employers are navigating workforce challenges while continuing to invest in their people, and uncertainty has become something many businesses simply factor into their daily decision-making.

Yet when I look across Brampton, I see far more than businesses reacting to circumstances. I see companies leading.

I see manufacturers modernizing their operations to remain globally competitive. I see entrepreneurs identifying new markets despite economic headwinds. I see organizations embracing innovation while remaining deeply committed to the people and communities they serve. Above all, I see a business community that understands growth is not something that happens to us, it is something we choose to build together.

That spirit has always defined Brampton. As one of Canada's fastest-growing cities, our success has never been accidental. It has been built by people willing to invest, take calculated risks, and create opportunities for others. Today, that same entrepreneurial mindset is helping shape emerging sectors such as advanced manufacturing, health innovation, aerospace, logistics, food processing, technology, and artificial intelligence, while strengthening the industries that have long driven our local economy.

At the Brampton Board of Trade, our role is to ensure that businesses are not navigating this changing landscape alone. We advocate for policies that improve competitiveness, champion the infrastructure needed to support continued growth, convene leaders to share ideas and solve common challenges, and increasingly, help businesses prepare for the future –whether through workforce development, international trade, or the practical application of emerging technologies like AI.

Many of the stories you'll read in this edition of *The Bramptonian* reflect those priorities. They showcase organizations making significant investments, leaders who are thinking differently, and partnerships that are helping strengthen our city. They remind us that while uncertainty may define the headlines, it does not define Brampton.

Our future will be shaped by the decisions we make today: to invest, to collaborate, to innovate, and to lead. I have never been more confident that this community is prepared to do exactly that.

Thank you for being part of that story.



INZOLA
GROUP

The state of *Business*

By Lisa Kopochinski

Since 2020, the Brampton Board of Trade (BBOT) has conducted the Business Confidence Index through an annual survey tailored for key local businesses, including both members and non-members.

The key objective of this survey is to measure the City's economic climate, with an emphasis on key areas of importance to Brampton. This report presents the findings from the sixth annual Business Confidence Index (BCI) survey, offering comparisons to previous iterations since BCI's inception.

This year, the questionnaire was updated to capture opinions on current events, including U.S. trade policies and the upcoming municipal election. Key tracking metrics remained in the questionnaire, including business confidence, issues facing businesses, and the impact of inflation.

To meet study objectives, 500 members and additional non-members of the Brampton Board of Trade were invited to complete the Business Confidence Index.

THE THREE MAIN TAKEAWAYS

- Confidence in the economy among business leaders is at an all-time low.

Business leaders have a pessimistic outlook on both Brampton's and their own organization's economic future, as confidence levels have dropped once again this year. This sentiment is likely linked to the recent plant closures and trade policies with the U.S. A small minority believe Brampton's economy will improve next year.

- Inflation and US trade policies have put pressure on business operations.

Business leaders report that inflation and recent U.S. trade policies have negatively impacted their organizations by reducing revenue and increasing expenses, among other issues.

- BBOT is well-positioned to become a trusted source for municipal election information.

Business leaders trust BBOT as a source of information for municipal elections.

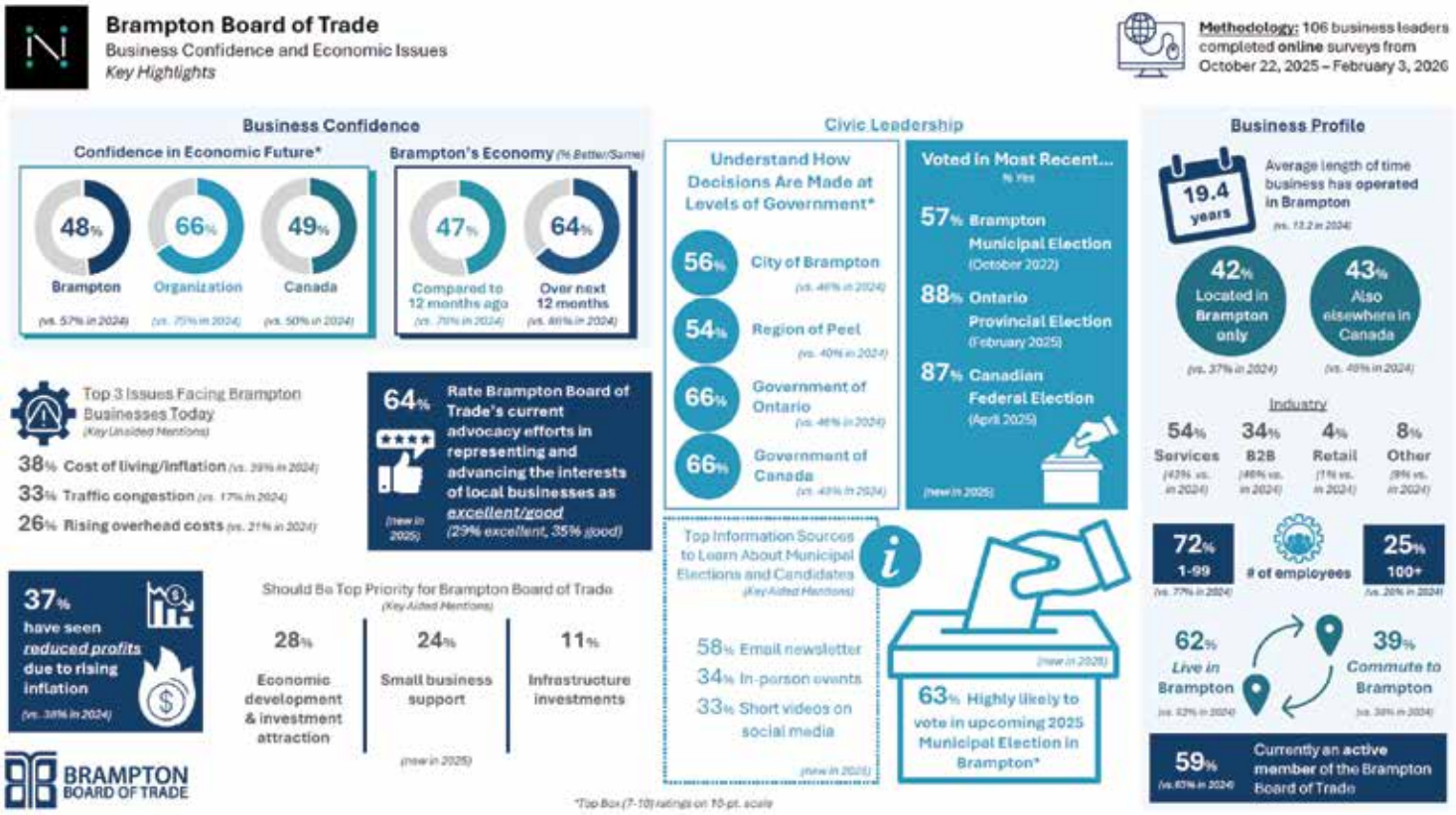
KEY FINDINGS

There were four key findings noted from this survey that included the following:

Business Confidence:

- Confidence has lowered this year; one half of business leaders are confident in both Brampton's (down 9 points) and Canada's (unchanged) economic future. Meanwhile, two-thirds are confident in their own organization's economic future (down 9 points). The 2025 Ontario Economic Report also showed

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that confidence in the provincial economy is low (26 per cent). Recent U.S. trade tensions and the Stellantis closure are likely contributing to sentiment.

- Brampton's economic conditions are strained; fewer than two in 10 believe Brampton's economy has improved over the past year, and only one quarter expects improvement in the year ahead. These results are well below those of previous years.

Issues Facing Business:

- The top three issues facing Brampton businesses are:
  - — The cost of living (38 per cent, down 1 point);
  - — Traffic congestion (33 per cent, up 16 points);
  - — Rising overhead costs (26 per cent, up 5 points), with other issues following closely behind.
- Inflation continues to negatively impact businesses in a variety of ways, including reduced profit (37 per cent), passing increased costs onto customers (33 per cent), reduced customer demand (33 per cent), and adjusting long-term financial forecasts (30 per cent).
- U.S. trade policies have primarily had no impact or a negative impact on Brampton businesses. Overall expenses, revenues, and capital expenditures have been the most heavily impacted. Business leaders do not expect these conditions will not improve over the next year.

Government and Elections:

- Understanding of how different levels of government make decisions has improved since last year, though there is still opportunity to further educate business leaders.
- Business leaders are more likely to have voted in the most recent provincial (88 per cent) or federal (87 per cent) elections than the municipal election (57 per cent). A similar number of voters (63 per cent) are expected to participate in the upcoming municipal election, presenting opportunity to promote civic engagement.
- Regarding communications, leaders would like to see more summaries that highlight implications for businesses and provide more information on candidates.
- There is moderate interest in attending BBOT events related to the municipal election, with the most appealing events being business-focused panels (53 per cent), virtual Q&As (42 per cent), and breakfast/luncheon Q&As (42 per cent).

BUSINESS CONFIDENCE

Business leaders were asked to rate their confidence in the economic future of Brampton, their own organization, and Canada.

It is important to note that confidence in Brampton's economic future is at its lowest with the average score being 6.2 out of 10 this year (compared to 6.5 in 2024). However, confidence in their own organization remains notably higher than in Brampton or Canada.

A survey was released one week after Stellantis announced in October 2025 that production would halt in Brampton and would be shifted to the U.S. This—along with tariff discussions from the Trump administration—likely contributed to the negative sentiment among business leaders.

Confidence in City of Brampton's Economic Future:

One-half of business leaders report being confident (score of 7-10 out of 10), continuing a downwards trend (down 9 points since 2024). One in five leaders are not confident (score of 1-4) in Brampton's future.

Confidence in Own Organization's Economic Future: Two-thirds show confidence in their own business, down 9 points since last year. One in ten indicate they are not confident in their own economic future.

Confidence in Canada's Economic Future: Results mirror those for Brampton, with one half of business leaders expressing confidence. Despite the drop in confidence in Brampton and their own business, confidence in Canada has remained the same since last year. In contrast, one in six show a lack of confidence in the country's economic future.

GOVERNMENT AND VOTING DECISIONS

It is also encouraging that business leaders' understanding of how decisions are made within the government has improved across each level since last year.

A moderate majority of business leaders are confident in their understanding of how decisions are made at the different levels of government. Just over one half each understand (score of 7-10) the decision-making process at the municipal and regional level, while two thirds each understand the provincial and national government levels.

This marks a notable improvement since last year, where the majority showed less confidence in their understanding at each level. However, there is still opportunity to educate business leaders given just under one half only have a moderate to low understanding of government decisions at the Brampton level. It is also important to note that understanding appears to be higher among BBOT members, compared to non-members.

It is also interesting to note that intentions to vote in the upcoming Brampton municipal election—scheduled for October 26, 2026— are lower compared to turnout for past provincial and federal elections.

Approximately two-thirds of business leaders say they are likely to vote in this municipal election. This result is similar to the number of leaders who said they voted in the 2022 municipal election.

Business leaders who report being more confident in Brampton's economic future are less likely to vote in the next municipal election (high confidence, 53 per cent;



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moderate confidence, 69 per cent; low confidence, 78 per cent). Voting is more likely among BBOT members, compared to non-members.

Business leaders were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a few statements regarding the BBOT as an information source for the municipal election.

Agreement levels (score of 7-10) are moderately strong; business leaders trust election information from the BBOT (71 per cent) and that the information is balanced and non-partisan (67 per cent). Comparatively, there is less agreement that the information informs their voting decision (56 per cent).

This presents a strong opportunity for the BBOT to position itself as a trusted source for information on candidates that may help business leaders make their final decision. In summary, business leaders largely agree that the BBOT is trustworthy.



ISSUES FACING BRAMPTON BUSINESSES

In a recent survey, the most pressing issues businesses face today include cost of living and traffic congestion.

Business leaders were presented with a list of issues and asked to choose the top three that pose the biggest challenge for Brampton businesses currently. Cost of living (38 per cent) remains the top concern, closely followed by traffic congestion (33 per cent) which has notably increased in mentions this year.

Multiple issues are closely tied for the third most important issue, each being mentioned by one quarter. They include rising overhead costs (26 per cent), external perceptions and bias toward Brampton (25 per cent), crime (24 per cent), and access to talent and skilled labour (23 per cent).

The 2025 Ontario Economic Report found that cost of living (78 per cent) was the top reason for concern about Ontario's economic outlook, followed by inflation (62 per cent). The Ontario Economic Report found that housing affordability/housing supply challenges (57 per cent) was one of the top issues whereas it is viewed as less of a problem for business leaders in this study (21 per cent).

When it comes to the current impact of trade policy Changes, it is interesting to note that U.S. trade policies appear to have either no impact or a negative impact on Brampton businesses.

For each area examined, a small number of leaders report that the policies have had a positive impact. Access to international markets, excluding the U.S., has seen the most positive impact (12 per cent).

Trade policies have had the largest negative impact on overall expenses (48 per cent), capital expenditures (45 per cent), and overall revenues (43 per cent). Access to international markets has seen the least negative impact (17 per cent).

It is also important to note that approximately one-third of business leaders appear to have no ties to the U.S. or international markets that impact their business.

A chat with three local business owners

By Lisa Kopochinski



Warren Kozonguizi, owner of The Co-operators,

Chris-Beth Cowie, owner of Empowered4x.

Dr. Omo Ogbamola, owner of Tripplemos Food Processing Company.

Business is booming in the Brampton and surrounding area, so what could be a better time to speak with three local business owners, who are members of the Brampton Board of Trade.

The Co-operators is a Canadian-owned insurance and financial services organization with a long-standing commitment to helping Canadians build financial security. With roots dating back to 1945, the organization has grown into a leading provider of multi-line insurance and investment solutions. Warren Kozonguizi is the owner.

Empowered 4x is more than a coworking space. This Brampton-based company is a launchpad for entrepreneurs, creators and changemakers. With more than 250 members across Ontario, the company provides the lead generation, strategic support and physical spaces that help business thrive. Chris-Beth Cowie is the owner of Empowered 4x.

Tripplemos Foods was built on a clear vision, to bridge the gap between cultural authenticity and regulatory excellence by creating high-quality, African-inspired food products that meet Canadian food safety standards. What began as a bold entrepreneurial transition for Dr. Omo Ogbamola has quickly evolved into a structured and scalable manufacturing operation serving a growing and diverse customer base.

The Bramptonian editor Lisa Kopochinski recently had the opportunity to sit down and speak with Kozonguizi, Cowie, and Dr. Ogbamola, to find out why they chose Brampton and what it means to their business, and what being a member of the BOT means to them. Here what they had to say.

***Bramptonian**: Tell us about your agency and company here in Brampton.*

Warren Kozonguizi (WK): At the Co-operators here in Brampton, we focus on delivering personalized advice and tailored coverage to meet the evolving needs of individuals, families, and businesses.

Chris-Beth Cowie (CC): Empowered4x was incorporated in 2020. However, we have been running since 2019 officially.

Dr. Omo Ogbamola (OO): Tripplemos

Food Processing Company is an award-winning, proudly Canadian, female-owned food manufacturing company specializing in authentic African spices and premium hibiscus teas produced locally under CFIA approved standards.

The business was founded in 2022 and incorporated in 2025 with a vision to preserve authentic African flavours while producing high-quality products that meet Canadian food manufacturing standards. Today, we manufacture 11 African spice blends and premium hibiscus tea, with additional products currently in development. Our products are available through Amazon, Walmart, Temu, eBay, the FAIRE wholesale marketplace, and in more than 20 African retail stores across Canada. We are now preparing for the next phase of growth through mainstream retail expansion and the establishment of our own dedicated food processing facility.

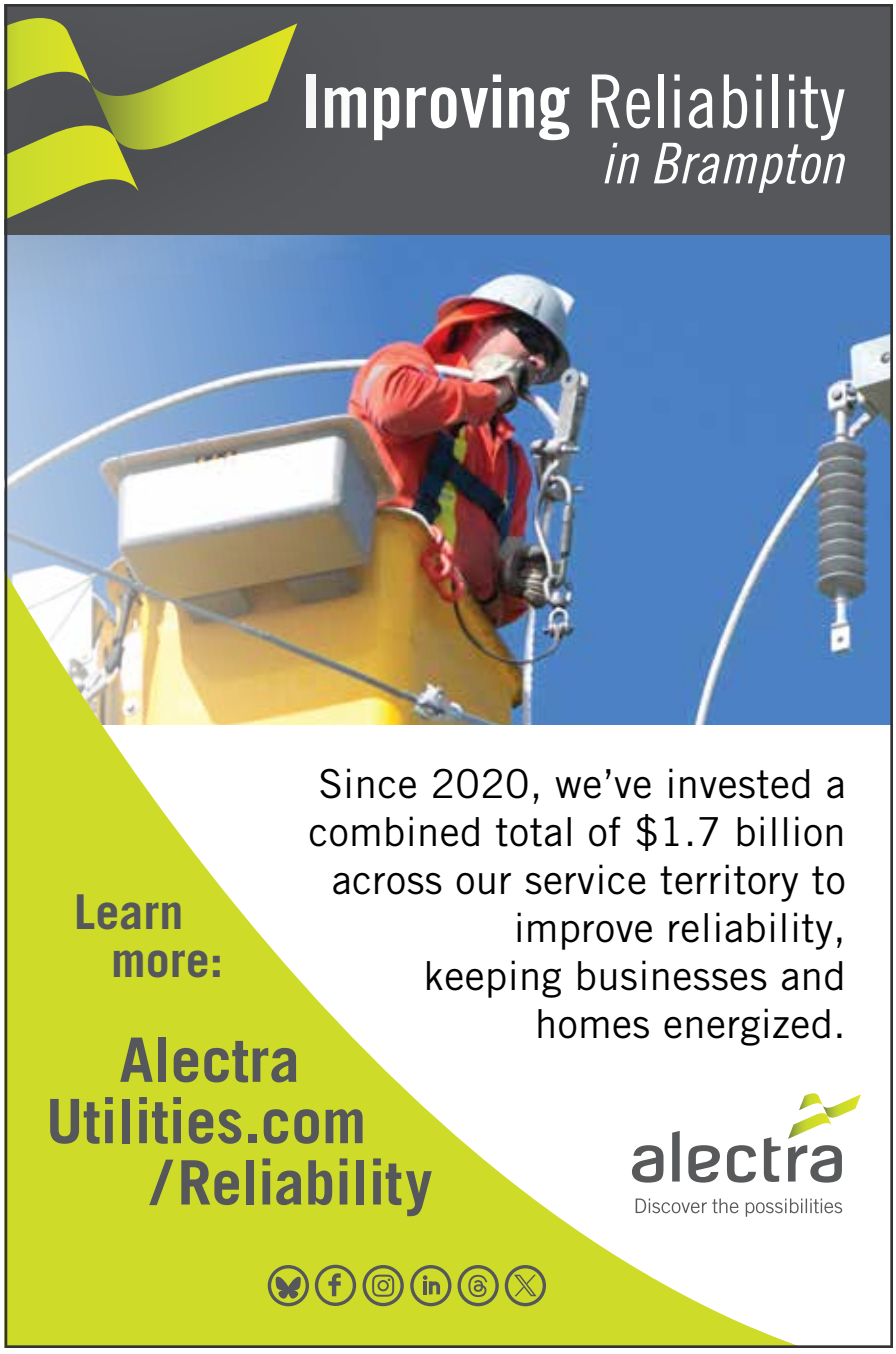
Operating within a highly regulated industry, Tripplemos has achieved CFIA approval, reinforcing its commitment to quality, compliance, and consumer safety. The company's product line includes a range of carefully developed spice blends and food essentials designed to deliver consistent flavour while meeting modern packaging and labeling standards.

Bramptonian: *Why did you chose Brampton for your business?*

WK: Brampton is one of Canada's fastest growing and most diverse cities, making it an ideal place to serve a wide range of clients with unique needs and perspectives. Its strong sense of community, entrepreneurial spirit, and economic growth create the perfect environment for building meaningful client relationships. Being part of this vibrant city allows us to contribute to and grow alongside the community we serve.

CC: Honestly, it was never really a question, Brampton is home.

The initial vision was simple but powerful: to create a home for entrepreneurs right here in Brampton. And we've been rooted here since the very inception. I've been a Bramptonian ever since I immigrated to Canada with my



"I'm so grateful for the support of BBOT, the support of Brampton as a whole, and the support of the entrepreneurs we get to serve every single day." — *Chris-Beth Cowie*

family in 2002, and this city has had my heart ever since. I love Brampton, and I'm for Brampton 100 percent.

When you're starting and building a business, doing it in a city you genuinely love makes all the difference. And I wasn't doing it alone. Early on, I connected with the Brampton Entrepreneur Centre, which gave me incredible insights on how to actually launch, first through their Summer Company program and then Starter Company Plus. I also plugged into the JobSkills entrepreneurship program back in 2014, when I first started speaking and training.

Back then, we were known as Empowered for Excellence. Then in 2019, as our business model evolved, we rebranded to who we are today: Empowered 4x.

Dr. OO: Brampton's diversity, entrepreneurial culture, and commitment to supporting small businesses made it the ideal location to establish and grow Tripplemos. As an immigrant entrepreneur, I found a welcoming business environment with access to valuable programs, networking opportunities, and strategic partnerships. Resources such as the Brampton Commercial Kitchen and the City's Economic Development Office have provided the structure and support needed to strengthen our manufacturing capabilities and prepare for larger retail opportunities. Brampton has become more than the home of our business. It has become a community that genuinely celebrates innovation, entrepreneurship, and business success.

Bramptonian: *How long have you been a member of the Brampton Board of Trade and what advantages have you received as a member?*

WK: I have been a member of the Brampton Board of Trade since August 2024. During this time, the Board has provided meaningful opportunities to connect with local businesses and professionals across the community. Through networking events, advocacy initiatives, and business focused programs, membership has helped us stay informed, engaged, and actively involved in shaping Brampton's business landscape. These connections and resources have supported our growth and strengthened our presence within the local economy.

CC: My story with them actually goes way back, I first joined around 2015 when I was just starting my business, and it was fantastic for networking right out of the gate.

Last year, I rejoined and wow, the events and the community have been so dynamic and supportive. I genuinely love the work the Board of Trade does, and coming back has let me rebuild those relationships and connections all over again.

One real highlight: my team and I had the privilege of working with the Board of Trade on the Naseem Somani Tribute video for the InspiHer Award. That was a deeply impactful experience learning about the life and legacy of someone so dynamic and inspirational, a woman who cared so much about her community and was truly valued by both the Board of Trade and Dynacare.

And it goes both ways! We've been able to host the Board of Trade right here at Empowered 4x, welcoming their team for New Member Orientation, and opening up our recording studio for the Expert Talk podcast. It's been wonderful being part of this community, and I'm excited for what's ahead.

Dr. OO: I joined the Brampton Board of Trade in January 2026, and my experience has been both rewarding and impactful. The Board has provided meaningful networking opportunities, increased visibility for my business, and valuable connections within Brampton's business community. Through business features, interviews, networking events, and introductions to industry leaders, I have established relationships that continue to support the growth of Tripplemos.

Receiving the Brampton Board of Trade Newcomer Business Achievement Award 2026 has been a tremendous honor and reflects

the organization's commitment to recognizing and supporting entrepreneurs who contribute positively to the local economy.

Bramptonian: *How important is community to you?*

WK: Community is at the heart of everything we do. At The Co-operators, we believe that strong communities are built through collaboration, support, and shared responsibility. Whether it's through local partnerships, sponsorships, or volunteer efforts, we are committed to making a positive and lasting impact in the communities we serve.

CC: Honestly, it's the whole reason I'm here. You know the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child?"

"Our long-term vision is to establish Tripplemos as one of Canada's leading manufacturers of authentic African-inspired food products." — *Dr. Omo Ogbampola*

Well, I believe it takes a village to raise a business too. And I've been lucky enough to have an incredible one. I'm so grateful for the support of BBOT, the support of Brampton as a whole, and the support of the entrepreneurs we get to serve every single day.

Right now, we're proud to support about 250 entrepreneurs, and we do it in a bunch of ways. We give them professional virtual business addresses, access to a recording studio, coworking space they can rent, and through our Marketing Agency, we power their businesses with AI marketing and automations.

And we're growing! Beyond our head office at 350 Rutherford Road, we've got three satellite locations. Want to plant your flag downtown? We've got you. Prefer Ottawa? We're there. Scarborough? Covered. Wherever you're building, there's a seat for you in our village.

Dr. OO: Community is central to everything I do because I believe businesses achieve lasting success by creating value beyond the





"Community is at the heart of everything we do."

— Warren Kozonguizi

products they sell. In addition to growing Tripplemos, I am committed to mentoring women, newcomers, and aspiring entrepreneurs by sharing knowledge, encouraging collaboration, and helping others navigate the realities of building a business in Canada. I believe that when entrepreneurs support one another, entire communities benefit through shared opportunities, stronger businesses, and sustainable economic growth. The success of Tripplemos is measured not only by the products we manufacture, but also by the people we inspire, the opportunities we create, and the communities we continue to serve.

Bramptonian: *What are your goals for your company for the next several years?*

WK: Looking ahead, our goals are centered on continued growth, deepening client relationships, and expanding our reach within the community. We aim to enhance our advisory services, embrace innovative solutions, and remain a trusted partner for our clients' insurance and financial needs. Supporting community initiatives and fostering long-term resilience will also remain a key priority.

CC: In a word: scale what works and uses AI to do it better. Everything we do is built around our 4X Method, four core areas where collaboration drives everything:

- ***Co-working:*** We support entrepreneurs working side by side, both in our in-person spaces and online.
- ***Co-learning:*** We create collaborative learning opportunities where our community grows their skills together.
- ***Co-living:*** We're investing in shared living and community spaces, building a true sense of belonging.
- ***Co-giving:*** We give, channeling support into community programs that matter.

Over the next several years, our goal is to do all of this even better leveraging AI and innovative tools to make every one of these areas more effective, more efficient, and more impactful as we navigate the road ahead. The mission stays the same; the tools just keep getting sharper.

Dr. OO: Our long-term vision is to establish Tripplemos as one of Canada's leading manufacturers of authentic African inspired food products. Over the next several years, we plan to expand into major retail chains across Canada, enter the United States market, and establish our own food processing facility to increase manufacturing capacity. We are also investing in product innovation through new tea varieties and the development of our proprietary Tripplemos African Cooking Blend™. Our goal is to make authentic African flavours more accessible while positioning Canadian manufactured African food products for success in mainstream markets.

Bramptonian: *What is the best way for our readers to contact you?*

WK: Readers can connect with us by visiting our local office in Brampton at 14-25 Fisherman drive, calling our office directly at (905) 840 4288 or reaching out via email at warren_kozonguizi@cooperators.ca We are always happy to have a conversation and explore how we can support their insurance and financial planning goals.

CC: If people want to contact me, they can email me at chrisbeth.cowie@empowered4x.com or call the office at (905) 792-8200.

Dr. OO: Readers are welcome to connect with Tripplemos Food Processing Company through our website and social media platforms.

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Dr. Omo Ogbamola (omoogbamola)
Instagram | Facebook | TikTok: @tripplemosfoods

Bramptonian: *Thank you for taking the time to talk with us today.*

WK: My pleasure.

CC: You are welcome.

Dr. OO: You are very welcome.

Tech forward event recap



Speaker Imtiaz Kermali's main takeaway at the event was don't let AI hype rush you.

On February 19, 2026, Tech Forward: Innovation AI & Beyond was held at Algoma University in Brampton, Ontario.

This high-impact half-day forum explored how emerging technologies, AI, immersive tech, and next-generation cybersecurity, are transforming business models and reshaping the future of work.

This event made this ideal for tech leaders, innovators, strategists, and future-focused business owners looking to stay ahead in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Featuring keynote speakers, expert panels, and hands-on demos in partnership with Algoma University's National Centre of Excellence for Immersive Technology.

BIANCA WYLIE: TECH FORWARD, AI AND BEYOND

2026 Tech Forward Keynote Speaker Bianca Wylie, Director at T&S Advisors, stressed that this event matters more than ever right now. In a world flooded with AI hype, she reminded attendees that excitement around new technology isn't new. The real risk is reacting without thinking. Her key takeaways included the following:

- Cut through the noise. Don't let hype drive decisions.
- Technology is cultural. It shapes how we work and relate to each other.
- Innovation is place-based. It depends on your context and community.
- You have agency. Not every tool needs to be adopted.
- Think beyond automation. Use new tech to create, not just cut.

"It's great to come together and talk about heart issues and talk about what we are curious about and what we are intrigued by."

She says we need more spaces like this.

"I have five key messages. The first one is that hype and

Speaker Bianca Wylie stressed the importance of having good relationships with each other.



enthusiasm for computers and new technology is a very old phenomenon. We need to remember that this supply pushes us to be reactive. And it has been this way for a long time."

Wylie told attendees to be aware of this, but to also understand that important things are happening.

"There's a lot of noise and a lot of flurries, and when you are destabilized by that, you cannot make great choices. You have to be aware of that."

She also told attendees that technology is really a cultural topic.

"We often think that this is a law or policy, or standards and business procedures. Those are all parts of it, but it is also impacting really important thinks like our relationships to each other, and how much space we have for inconvenient things, and frictions that we need for democracy."

She stressed the importance of having good relationships with each other. She also said there are also three other things. The first one being that innovation is really about a place-based kind of thinking and processes.

"It's not computers. It might be part of innovation, but innovation is how you do things, and how you do them from where you are and who you work with."

Wylie says the second thing is that we have an opportunity to respond to technologies and receiving them.

"We need to ask if these are working for you. Just because it is there doesn't mean you have to use it. We have more power and agency than we think."

She also emphasizes the need to slow down and ask what you want from this.

"What problem am I trying to solve, so we know this isn't going to fall from the sky. We have to be active participants in responding to it."

Wylie also says the final thing is that while we can use new technologies—for automations and efficiencies—sometimes small and sometimes large ones.

"There's a lot of interesting work to do that is not that. It's thinking about a creative way to a problem. What would be expensive before and now we have a chance to do it using a new tool."

She adds that we need to think sometimes a little bit less about removing and more about additive, and ask ourselves how we can change things and mix them up.

"Can I use these in a new and different way? And can I find people to work on projects like this? This is a near thing to consider for the future."

IMTIAZ KERMALI: INNOVATION, AI AND BEYOND

2026 Tech Forward Case Study Speaker Imtiaz Kermali's main takeaway at the event was don't let AI hype rush you.

"AI is a journey. You don't need to sprint. First, define what you want out of it. Diagnose the problem before looking for the prescription."

In his session, Imtiaz, Chief Business Officer ad eShipper, talked about how AI should be administered and shared how eShipper applied AI in practical ways. The team streamlined repetitive, manual finance processes, improving efficiency while also supporting better work-life balance. The goal wasn't about replacing people. It was about humanizing systems and freeing teams to focus on higher-value work.

"You need to focus on what you want to get out of AI and then ensure you spend the time and effort on it," he says.

His speech included discussing the company's case study and how they utilized AI and humanized it.

"We taken simple processes and flows within our business that were manual and repetitive and taking up a lot of time. We put some systems together to try to get better efficiencies in terms of time, but to also help our finance team get a better-work-life balance and get the finances out as quickly as possible."

He thinks of AI as a journey and says every business should also look at it as a journey.

"Don't think you have to print through this journey. You need to understand what you want to get out of AI and then work toward that problem. Find a diagnosis before you look for the prescription. And, if you do that, you'll be in really quality time.

To sum up, his message was clear. Start with the problem. Be intentional. Build systems that work for your people, not just your bottom line.

BUILDING BRAMPTON
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"In an increasingly uncertain world, Canada needs to build a strong, resilient economy that is not reliant on any country.

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Together, we are building Brampton and Canada Strong."

- Sonia Sidhu



SONIA SIDHU
Member of Parliament
Brampton South

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BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS: *Another great year!*

Once again the achievements of Brampton's outstanding community were celebrated at the 20026 Brampton Board of Trade Business Excellence Awards.

Held on May 28 at the Nuvo Event Space located at 7920 Mississauga Road, this prestigious event shined a spotlight on the innovation, leadership, and success of companies that continue to show Brampton's excellence.

The event began with a Networking Cocktail Reception that kicked off the evening by connecting Brampton's business leaders, innovators, and community builders.

An elegant four-course dinner was offered and award presentations recognized businesses, entrepreneurs, and leaders who are driving economic growth and shaping the future of the city. Each award highlighted businesses and organizations that are not only achieving success, but also actively shaping our city's economic growth, impact and future potential.

Being nominated for a Business Excellence Award is more than recognition. It is an opportunity to elevate your brand, build credibility, and showcase your success to the broader business community.

BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

Dr. Mohamed Lachemi, President and Vice-Chancellor of Toronto Metropolitan University, was named 2006 Business Person of the Year.

A respected leaders in education, innovation and city building, Dr. Lachemi has played an important role in advancing talent development, research excellence, and industry collaboration.

It is clearly evident that his commitment to fostering growth and strengthening connections between academia and business will continue to make a lasting impact on the city.

BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Roshel Inc. has been named 2026 Business of the Year, A global leader in advanced manufacturing and armoured vehicle production, Roshel has demonstrated exceptional growth, innovation, and operational excellence. The company has placed Brampton on the map as a hub for world-class manufacturing.

Through its commitment to quality, job creation and international market, this company exemplifies the strength and resilience of Brampton's business community.

Congratulations!





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BUSINESS OF THE YEAR
Roshel Inc.



BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR
Dr. Mohamed Lachemi

Strong communities are *built by leaders*

The Brampton Board of Trade has always believed that strong communities are built by leaders willing to invest in something bigger than themselves.

Over the past several weeks, we've been inviting a small group of organizations to become BBOT Foundation Partners - businesses that recognize that a vibrant, independent business voice doesn't happen by accident. It



requires investment, leadership, and a shared commitment to the future of our city.

I want to sincerely thank the first organizations that have stepped forward:

- ALMAG Aluminum
- Kallo Developments
- Maple Lodge Farms
- Brar's
- TD

Your confidence in BBOT and, more importantly, in the future of Brampton's business community, means a great deal.

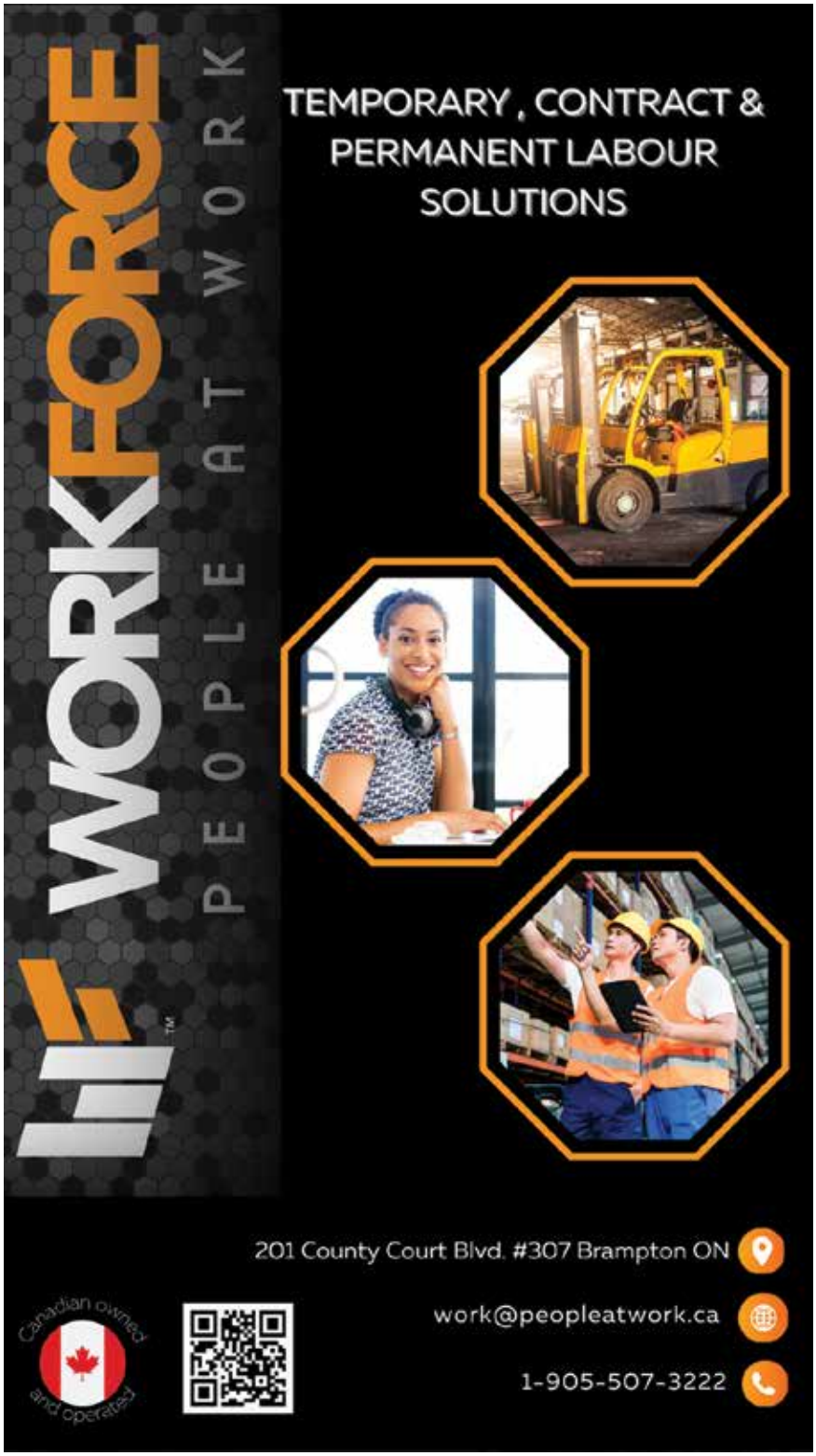
This investment isn't about supporting an organization for the sake of the organization. It's about ensuring that businesses continue to have a strong advocate, that employers have access to meaningful programming and connections, and that together we continue building a more competitive, innovative, and prosperous Brampton.

The momentum we're building in areas like AI, cybersecurity, defence, global trade, workforce development, and MedTech is creating new opportunities for businesses across our community.

Foundation Partners are helping ensure BBOT has the capacity to continue growing that impact. We're still welcoming a limited number of organizations that would like to join this group of community leaders. If your organization believes, as we do, that investing in the business community is an investment in Brampton itself, we'd welcome the opportunity to have a conversation.

To our inaugural Foundation Partners – thank you for leading by example!

"Your confidence in BBOT, and more importantly in the future of Brampton's business community, means a great deal."



Policy and advocacy explained: *A Brampton citizen's guide to driving local change*



By Vijai Kumar Singh, Manager of Policy and Government Relations, Brampton Board of Trade

Every single day, our lives are profoundly shaped by decisions made in rooms few have visited. From the timing of the transit bus you catch on Queen Street, to the wait times at Brampton Civic Hospital, down to the rules governing how your business operates, policy dictates our quality of lives. Yet, for many residents of Brampton, Ontario, the machinery of government can feel like a black box—opaque, intimidating, and intentionally complex.

This guide is designed to dismantle that complexity. Whether you are passionate about safer bike lanes, affordable housing, healthcare funding, or environmental sustainability, this guide will unpack exactly how government is structured in Brampton, how policy is made, and the exact step-by-step roadmap you can use to advocate for meaningful change in your neighbourhood.

THE JURISDICTIONAL MATRIX—WHO DOES WHAT?

The most common pitfall in advocacy is presenting a brilliant solution to the wrong person. In Brampton, governance is divided across three distinct layers, each operating within its own strict boundaries defined by the Canadian Constitution. If you bring a provincial grievance to a federal representative, your efforts will stall, not out of malice, but because they simply lack the legal jurisdiction to act.

1. Municipal Government (City of Brampton and Region of Peel)

The first layer is the municipality. In Brampton, we belong to two municipalities: the City of Brampton and the Regional Municipality of Peel. Instead of having a single local government handle every single service from garbage collection to transit, residents in Brampton live under a division of responsibilities shared between a lower-tier municipality and an upper-tier municipality.

The City of Brampton handles hyper-local services—the things that directly impact your neighbourhood street, local park, or daily commute within city boundaries.

- ***Local transit:*** Brampton Transit / Züm
- ***Emergency services:*** Brampton Fire and Rescue
- ***Community amenities:*** Parks, recreation centers, local arenas, arts and culture and public libraries
- ***Local land use:*** Zoning bylaws, building permits, and neighbourhood design
- ***Local infrastructure:*** Residential roads, snowplowing on city streets, stormwater management, and local traffic control
- ***Business and economic development:*** Helping to attract businesses and create jobs.
- ***By-law enforcement:*** Enforcing property standards, landlord licensing, parking, and noise rules.

Key leadership at this level includes the mayor, city councillors, and regional councillors.

Peel Region operates above Brampton and includes its neighbouring municipalities of Mississauga and Caledon to manage

large-scale infrastructure and social services that benefit from shared resources and economies of scale.

- ***Water and utilities**:* Water treatment, clean drinking water delivery, and wastewater/sewer management
- ***Waste management**:* Residential garbage, recycling, and organic waste collection and processing
- ***Regional paramedics and health:*** Peel Regional Paramedic Services, public health initiatives, and long-term care
- ***Social services:*** Subsidized housing, income support, and childcare assistance
- ***Regional arterial roads**:* Major arterial roads and corridors (e.g., Dixie Rd, Bovaird Dr, Steeles Ave)
- ***Law enforcement:*** Peel Regional Police (serving Brampton and Mississauga where Caledon is served by the Ontario Provincial Police)

*water and wastewater, waste management, and regional roads are currently being "downloaded" to the lower-tier municipalities in 2027 onwards.

Key leadership at this level includes the regional chair and select regional councillors from all three municipalities.

Funding these municipal priorities is property taxes. Property taxes are paid by property owners in a municipality. In Brampton, 40.4 per cent of your property taxes go towards the City of Brampton, 40.2 per cent is paid to the Region of Peel, and 19.4 per cent is paid to school boards.

2. Provincial Government (Ontario)

Brampton also falls under the jurisdiction of the Province of Ontario. In Canadian constitutional law, municipalities are often described as "creatures of the province" because they have no independent constitutional status. They exist and operate entirely at the discretion of the provincial government.

As a result, the premier and the provincial cabinet possess sweeping authority to intervene in local affairs—from altering municipal boundaries and changing council structures to overriding local planning decisions. In practice, almost every municipal issue is ultimately a provincial issue, leaving cities to constantly advocate to Queen's Park (the seat of the provincial legislature) for the funding and legislative authority needed to manage their growing local responsibilities.

Beyond its power over municipalities, the province holds primary responsibility for key public sectors, including:

- ***Healthcare:*** Administering hospitals, medical services, and public health insurance programs.
- ***Education:*** Managing public schools including schools boards, trade schools, colleges, and universities.
- ***Social services:*** Overseeing social welfare programs, child welfare, and housing policy.
- ***Property and civil rights:*** Regulating contracts, employment standards, and landlord-tenant relationships.
- ***Justice:*** Administering civil and provincial courts, legal aid, and provincial policing.



Understanding which jurisdiction handles which issue ensures that when election cycles arrive, you can evaluate candidates based on the actual power they hold rather than promises outside their legal scope.

- ***Natural resources:*** Managing forestry, mining, and provincial public lands.
- ***Transportation:*** Maintaining provincial highways, issuing driver's licenses, and vehicle registration.
- ***Securities Regulation:*** Creating and enforcing local laws governing stock, bond, and fund trading.
- ***Prisons:*** Managing provincial reformatories and prisons.
- ***Corporate incorporation:*** Incorporating companies with specific provincial objects.
- ***Marriage:*** Regulating the solemnization (ceremonies) of marriage.
- ***Municipalities:*** Creating and regulating local municipal governments.

Key leadership at this level include the Premier, Provincial cabinet (Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries), and Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs).

In Canada, provinces are constitutionally protected which means that the federal government cannot intervene in these matters. The province can also levy provincial taxes to raise revenue and borrow funds to finance expenditures.

3. Federal Government (Canada)

Finally, Brampton is subject to the jurisdiction of the federal government of Canada. Of the three levels of government, Ottawa holds the greatest financial capacity—often referred to as the "power of the purse"—because it collects the largest share of tax revenues and redistributes capital across the country for national initiatives, infrastructure, and municipal transfer payments.

Its core constitutional responsibilities focus on matters of national interest, including:

- ***National defense and security:*** Managing the Canadian Armed Forces, border security, and international intelligence.
- ***Foreign affairs and trade:*** Negotiating international treaties, trade agreements, and managing global diplomatic relations.
- ***Immigration, refugees and citizenship:*** Setting national immigration targets, processing visa and citizenship applications, and managing settlement policy.
- ***National economic and fiscal policy:*** Managing the national currency (via the Bank of Canada), federal taxation, national debt, and banking regulation.
- ***Interprovincial and international transportation:*** Regulating aviation, passenger rail (VIA Rail), maritime shipping, and international border crossings.
- ***Criminal law:*** Maintaining the Criminal Code of Canada to ensure uniform criminal justice across all provinces and territories.



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- ***Major transfer payments:*** Funding key social safety nets through the Canada Health Transfer (CHT), Canada Social Transfer (CST), and direct-to-resident benefits like Employment Insurance (EI) and the Canada Child Benefit (CCB).

Key leadership includes the prime minister, federal cabinet (ministers), and members of parliament (MPs). The federal government collected federal taxes from all Canadians.

The Golden Rule of Advocacy:

While direct advocacy through delegations, meetings, and petitions drives policy between campaigns, elections remain the foundational mechanism for holding decision-makers accountable. Every few years, Brampton residents exercise their power at the ballot box to elect the mayor, councillors, MPPs, and MPs who represent their values. Voting sets the political mandate for each level of government, directly influencing how budgets are allocated and which legislative priorities advance. Understanding which jurisdiction handles which issue ensures that when election cycles arrive, you can evaluate candidates based on the actual power they hold rather than promises outside their legal scope.

A MULTI-LEVEL HOUSING ADVOCACY EXAMPLE

To see how these jurisdictional layers intersect in real-world advocacy, consider how a resident in Brampton can fight for affordable housing. Rather than relying on a single avenue, a strategic advocate targets every tier of government according to its specific powers:

- ***City of Brampton Council (Local zoning):*** You can register to delegate to City Council to advocate for updating local zoning bylaws—pushing for policies like "as-of-right" multi-unit housing (duplexes, triplexes, and garden suites) or streamlined planning approvals for non-profit housing developments.
- ***Region of Peel Council (Social Housing Services):*** You can delegate to Regional Council to request increased municipal support for social housing infrastructure, expanded emergency shelter capacity, and local rent-assistance subsidies managed by the Region.
- ***Members of provincial parliament (MPPs):*** You can meet with your local MPPs to advocate for the provincial government to increase direct operational and capital funding for social housing providers, provide infrastructure grants to help municipalities build housing-enabling services, and strengthen tenant protections.
- ***Members of parliament (MPs):*** You can meet with your local MPs to encourage the federal government in Ottawa to engage in cost-sharing agreements with the province under national housing programs, unlocking capital grants to build and retain long-term affordable housing.

By tailoring your message to each specific tier, you transform a broad goal into a targeted, actionable advocacy campaign across all levels of government.

Vijai Kumar Singh is the manager, policy and government relations at the Brampton Board of Trade. He can be reached at vsingh@bramptonbot.com.



Why arts are important to city development

Arts and culture generate economic returns while creating the kind of cities people can feel truly proud to call home.

By Michael Vickers, Executive Director, Brampton Arts Organization



Mayor Patrick Brown, members of Brampton City Council and local artists celebrate the launch of the new BAO Studio Rentals in Downtown Brampton Photo credit: ©Herman Custodio.

At the Brampton Arts Organization (BAO), we believe that arts, culture and creative industries are much more than a 'nice to have' or there for entertainment- but they are essential infrastructure that helps cities attract investment, grow tourism, improve health and build thriving, safe communities.

As one of Canada's fastest growing and most diverse cities, investing in the arts here in Brampton isn't simply about supporting artists or musicians, but is about building a city with a reputation as a place where people want to live, work, study, visit, and conduct business.

When people hear the words "investment" or "infrastructure" they normally think about new hospitals, roads, transit, or housing which are all critical, but the most successful cities recognize how vital it is to invest in artist spaces, festivals, live music, theatres, galleries, creative workspaces, and cultural events that create places that people want to put their time, energy and money into. Brampton's business community must do the same- and the case for doing so is stronger and simpler than some might even realize.

The economic case for investing in the arts is clear and has been for some time. As the Ontario Chamber of Commerce = details in its brief, "Ontario's Arts, Culture, and Creative Industries: Strengthening Competitiveness and Communities" arts, culture, and creative industries contribute more than $26 billion annually to the province's GDP and support nearly 300,000 jobs.

Looking across Canada, arts and culture generated an estimated $17 billion in federal and provincial tax revenue in 2024 alone. These aren't abstract numbers- they represent local jobs, businesses, tax revenue and hyper-local spending that benefits everyone in Brampton, whether they work in the arts or not. Rather than viewing arts and culture as a fun, occasional expense, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce



One of hundreds of visitors at BAO's Annual Summer Artist Market. Photo courtesy of the Brampton Arts Organization

argues they must be recognized as a smart strategic economic asset that strengthens competitiveness and communities.

The benefits of cultural investment extend well beyond the creative sector itself, of course. Restaurants, cafés, hotels, retail shops, and small businesses all benefit when people attend cultural events or visit creative or cultural districts. Just think of Miami's Wynwood neighbourhood covered in artist murals (and now tourists) or cultural corridors in European capitals.

Recent research from the Ontario Arts Council shows that cultural tourists stay longer and spend far more than the average visitor, creating additional economic activity that benefits local businesses and municipalities alike. Arts and culture tourism has tripled the financial impact of other types of tourism such as sporting events.

The Arts complement Brampton's investments in sport (cricket, hockey soccer) by attracting a different type of a more engaged visitor, encouraging longer stays and generating more spending throughout the year.

Let's also remember that arts and culture also help cities attract and retain talent- people want downtowns where they can go see live music at different venues after work or check out an art exhibition on the way home. Today's workers choose to live in cities that offer a high quality of life- and that means vibrant and creative public spaces, and opportunities to connect with their neighbours over a concert.



Local artists such as Malachi Watson Narcisse share artist studios in Brampton that bring economic impact and cultural vibrancy to neighbourhoods. Photo courtesy of the Brampton Arts Organization.

Companies looking to invest or relocate (think, say, a major consider telecommunications company considering an office downtown) factor this all in when deciding where to grow as well. Artists are the original innovators and a city known for creative innovation, and culture has the best chance of attracting skilled workers and business investment. We can't get left behind as we see this work successfully in other parts of the GTA.



Dancers Perform as part of Luminato Festivals performances last June in Garden Square, Brampton. Photo courtesy of the Brampton Arts Organization.

Just as importantly, the arts strengthen the social fabric and wellbeing of a community, offering opportunities for people from different backgrounds to share stories, celebrate cultures, and build understanding. In a diverse city like Brampton, this helps foster meaningful belonging, civic pride, and stronger neighbourhood connections. Arts programming also improves mental well-being, reduce social isolation, activate public spaces, and encourage residents to become more engaged in their community.

These social outcomes ultimately contribute to healthier, safer, and more resilient cities. investing in arts and culture is also a smart way to maximize the return on existing infrastructure or real estate- parks become gathering places through performances and festivals and vacant or underused city owned buildings can be quickly transformed into artist studios and creative hubs, as BAO has done at 8 Nelson Street West in Downtown Brampton.

As the Brampton Arts Organization looks ahead to the municipal election and a new term of council, these are just some of the reasons why we are calling for arts and culture to be embedded and prioritized throughout municipal planning and economic development—not doing so is just giving our neighbouring cities an even greater chance to get ahead.

We believe in integrating arts into city planning, investing in affordable creative spaces, providing stable funding for all cultural organizations, and recognizing film, music, and the broader creative industries as key economic drivers- all things backed up by some of the numbers we've already shared. These are practical actions that support our arts sector and in turn strengthen Brampton's business community, encourage tourism, and improve quality of life for Bramptonians.

The question is no longer whether cities across Canada can afford to invest in the arts. It is about if they cannot afford not to. A Brampton that prioritizes creativity and the arts is a Brampton that is better positioned to compete for talent, investment and real innovation while building stronger communities. Arts and culture generate economic returns while creating the kind of cities people can feel truly proud to call home.

The Brampton Arts Organization is a registered non-profit that champions Brampton's diverse arts, culture and creative industries and advocates for the local arts community. We work to build a thriving, confident, valued, and empowered creative scene by offering a range of free programs, services and resources in the community across Brampton.

Whether you're a business owner, resident or community leader, you can play a role by attending local arts events, supporting cultural organizations, and advocating for arts investment, Together, we can ensure Brampton continues to grow as vibrant, creative city where arts and culture are recognized as essential to our shared future and economic prosperity. To learn more and donate today, visit www.bramptonartsorg.ca.

Michael Vicker is the artist and executive director of the Brampton Arts Organization. He can be reached at michael@bramptonartsorg.ca.



Local artists and creative entrepreneurs gather at one of BAO's many free local artist gatherings and community events. Photo courtesy of the Brampton Arts Organization.

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