



## **Mayor Walter Sendzik**

Walter Sendzik was born and raised in St. Catharines. In 2014, as a first time candidate for political office he was elected as Mayor of St. Catharines and re-elected in 2018. As Mayor, Walter brings a strategic focus and business-like approach to City Hall where he has focused on streamlining processes and building a culture of excellent customer service. Since becoming Mayor, the City has approved a new strategic plan and economic development strategy, stabilized tax rate increases and implemented long-term budgeting.

With a background in business, Mayor Sendzik has been a strong advocate for local business and regularly meets with local businesses, employers and investors. Understanding transportation as key for business success and getting people to work, school and services, Mayor Sendzik has led in the transformation of inter-municipal transit from pilot project to a permanent service that will connect all of Niagara's communities. He has helped bring private sector partners to community events and worked with the development community on a new Housing Action Plan.

In 2015 Mayor Sendzik launched the Compassionate City initiative which has helped inspire St. Catharines' residents to take action to build a city where everyone belongs. With his open door policy, Mayor Sendzik is accessible to residents, charities and community groups and regularly participates in fundraisers, 5 k's and cultural experiences. Mayor Sendzik is focused on building on the progress and momentum of the city and the greater Niagara region as an attractive place to live, work and invest.

Prior to becoming Mayor, Walter was the Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce. During his seven years at the Chamber, Walter led the evolution of the local chamber into a truly Niagara Chamber with more than 1,400 members. Under Walter's leadership, the GNCC established itself as the largest business organization in Niagara and the third largest in Ontario. It is also the only Chamber in Niagara to receive accreditation with distinction for operational excellence by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Prior to the Chamber, Walter founded Vines Publishing, a company specializing in wine and travel magazines and wine books. He sold the company in 2005. Walter has co-authored five books including *Vines: The Buyer's Guide to Canadian Wine* and *The Insider's Guide to Niagara Wine Country*.

Walter has served on local and provincial boards including Niagara College, Hotel Dieu Shaver, Pathstone Mental Health and LCBO. He currently serves on the boards of Niagara Regional Housing and the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Board of Directors and LUMCO, the Large Urban Mayor's Caucus of Ontario.

In 2008 Walter was awarded the Bernie Gillespie Award by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce as top executive of the year. He is also a recipient of a Niagara Top 40 Under 40 Award. He is an active Rotarian and an honorary member of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 24 and the Canadian Polish Society. Walter holds a Masters from McGill University and an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree from Wilfrid Laurier University and holds an ICD – Rotman Directors Education Program from the Rotman School of Business.