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Michael Tibollo
Community Champion

Feature Story



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Gerard Borean, is a founding partner of Parente, Borean LLP. For the last 30 years Gerard has practiced civil litigation, particularly in the areas of Municipal Law.

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Letter from the Editor



Spring gives you all its best “a song from every robin’s nest” and joy, which warms your heart, giving you energy to once again experience life.

I am happy Spring is here to feel the warmer weather and see the tulips with sunshine. The continuous smile on people’s faces demonstrates that some type of normality can be

re-established with Covid restrictions being relaxed.

As a resident of Vaughan, I have followed Minister Michael Tibollo in his career as a lawyer, and Minister in the Ford Government and a leader giving back to the people in his community. Michael Tibollo has worked tirelessly for the citizens of Vaughan and Ontario. We highlight him as the, Feature Story in this Spring Issue.

The L’Atelier Boutique carries the Frasscara line of Dresses. I invite you to visit this fashion shop and model one of your favourite Italian Dresses made in Italy as seen in our magazine.

In this issue we celebrate Mother’s Day on May 8th and Father’s Day on June 19th. As parents, we guide and watch our children grow into parents and have children of their own.

It is important to celebrate these particular days throughout the year in order to not lose our family values in this changing world.

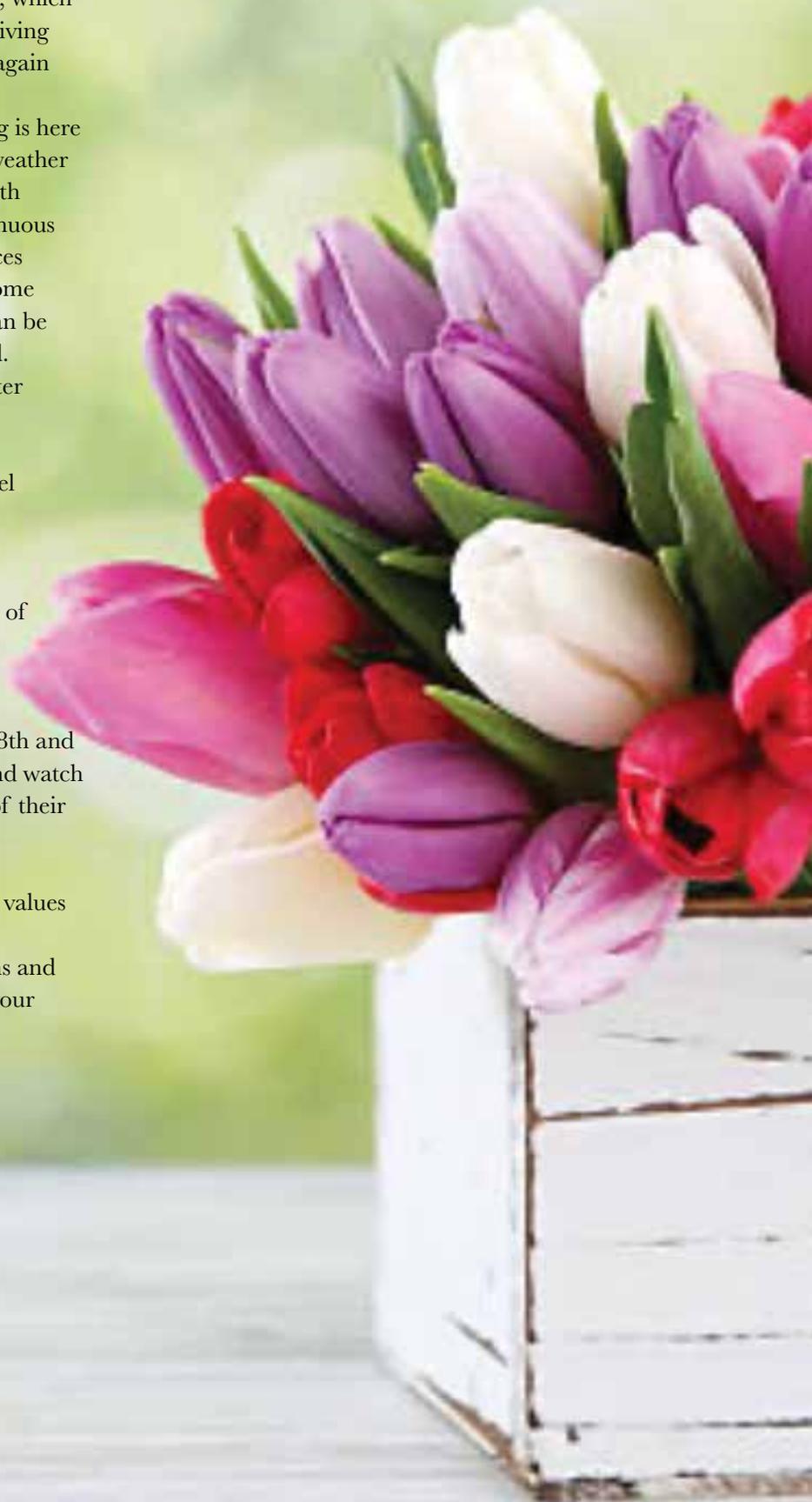
In lieu of the two year rollercoaster of restrictions and lockdowns, be sure to find the time to plan all of your overdue vacations and enjoy life to the fullest!

Enjoy Spring with a smile!

Cheers

A stylized, cursive signature of Josie Alonzi in black ink.

Josie Alonzi



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Office of the Mayor of Vaughan **Maurizio Bevilacqua**



Delivering results through purpose-driven leadership

What motivates and drives me forward every day is a deep love for my city and its people. The mandate of public servants is to seize the moment and bring about positive change. I live each day with an attitude of gratitude and I am inspired by answering Rabbi Hillel's three famous purposeful questions: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am not for others, who am I? And if not now, when?" The human condition is rooted in every component of city-building in Vaughan. Our efforts are guided by a genuine desire to serve and a common purpose to attract opportunities for business investment and higher education, elevate the quality of life and move our city

forward without leaving anyone behind. Ultimately, public service stems from a yearning to improve the standard of living in our communities. When you are called to lead, you are called to serve. I have always said that public service is a vocation, not a job. You must be willing to place the needs of others before your own. That is what authentic leadership is truly all about. Purpose-driven leadership has helped generate 60,000 jobs, build a downtown core, attract a university, open Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital - Canada's first smart hospital, create a 900-acre park and welcome two subway connections. Today, our city has an exciting and promising future on the horizon. It has been a remarkable journey, and I look forward to the next chapter as Vaughan continues to take its rightful place as one of the greatest cities in Canada.

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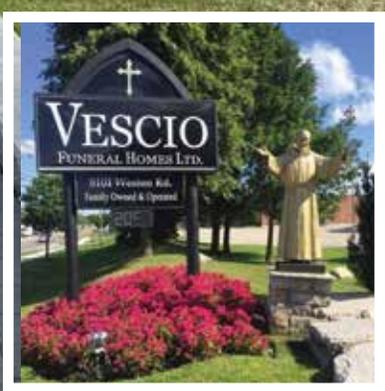
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Preston Street

by *Franco Ricci*

The primary focus of this study is the Ottawa roadway named Preston Street/Corso Italia. For those old enough to remember, Preston Street is the main thoroughfare of a neighborhood area once known as The Village. The street is thus an important vestige of a long-standing community; a visual memory replete with the historical experiences of displacement and immigration, finding jobs, and raising families.

For the younger set, Preston Street is a contemporary asphalt pavement; a space that is often not very relevant to their lives beyond the entertainment the local establishments seek to provide.

If we consider the image of the street that emerges from these past and present memory places we find that for the older members of the Italian-Canadian community, family histories, recalled events, and shared memories are the vital monuments that evoke former times and give the street a comfortable humane essence.

For the younger crowd, contemporary food spots, upbeat events and outdoor activities that animate the street supply the emotions that will become the future recollections of their youth.

When seen from this perspective, the often haphazard

events of this collective narrative vouchsafe the foundations of our definition of the local character of the Italian-Canadian community that was, and remains, an essential element of the area.

While the tone of the study is that of an historical chronicle, I orient myself towards a celebration of the community that created that life history and gloss personal differences between members of the community in favor of the positive common mental pictures nurtured by the Italian-Canadians of Ottawa.

I focus on landmarks, institutions, professions, associations, celebrations that present consistent

perceptions of social unity, commonality, and community relationship. The image of Preston Street and its Italian-Canadian community displays vitality and hope and evolves within the annals of time.

This study therefore concentrates on the identity that the Italian-Canadian community has created of and for itself as reflected in the nature of the street that has come to symbolize its existence.

And so, the ultimate purpose of this written account is to produce a visual memory for the Italian-Canadian community of Ottawa before that memory forever dissipates into the realm of youthful forgetfulness and disregard.

More importantly, it wishes to give a voice to those that have remained silent, if not often forgotten, in the hope that one day their story might not have been unremembered.





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Federal Budget 2022

by *Francesco Sorbara, MP*

On April 7th, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, presented Budget 2022 in the House of Commons. A plan for targeted and responsible investments to create jobs, grow the economy and make life affordable more for all Canadians.

In my view, Budget 2022 focuses on raising Canadians' living standards through robust and sustained economic growth. It makes long-term investments that will increase the productive capacity of our economy by providing the tools that Canadian workers and businesses need to recover from the pandemic and compete both domestically and internationally.

Budget 2022 comprises the priorities that Canadians expect us to deliver on. For Vaughan-Woodbridge residents & businesses, it means transformational investments to help them: enter the workforce & upgrade their skills, grow their business, buy their first home, access medical and dental care, transition to cleaner energy sources and associated technology, close tax-loopholes, and much more. Our government is investing in:

AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOME-BUYING HELP

- A new Tax-Free First Home Savings Account: first-time home buyers will be able to save up to \$40,000. Tax-free in, tax-free out.
- A new Housing Accelerator Fund to help municipalities & regions speed up housing supply (worth over \$4 billion).
- A new Multigenerational Home Renovation Tax Credit: up to \$7,500 in support for constructing a secondary suite for a senior or an adult with a disability, starting in 2023.

JOBS & GROWTH

- A new Labour Mobility Deduction, providing a tax deduction of up to \$4,000 per year in eligible travel and temporary relocation expenses to eligible tradespersons and apprentices.
- Cutting taxes for Canada's Growing Small Businesses by phasing out access to the small business tax rate more gradually, with

access to be fully phased out when taxable capital reaches \$50 million, rather than at \$15 million.

- Establishing the Canada Growth Fund to support economic growth and durable and stable supply chains.

STRONG PUBLIC HEALTH CARE

- A National Dental Care program with \$5.3 billion over five years and \$1.7 billion each year thereafter. We are starting in 2022 with children under 12 years old with full expansion by the end of 2023.
- The enhanced Canada Health Transfer to take immediate steps to reduce backlogs in surgeries and procedures and make it easier for Canadians to access the health care services they need with a \$2 billion top-up to provinces.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- Meeting Canada's climate change target by proposing a new tax credit for businesses that spend money on carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS) - with \$2.6 billion over five years.
- Extending incentives and expanding eligibility for a program to encourage more Canadians to buy electric vehicles.
- Launching Canada's first strategy for the exploration of Canada's vast critical minerals resources with a commitment of \$3.8 billion.

Ultimately, these bold investments and all measures contained in the budget will help put more money directly in the pockets of Canadian workers and support small businesses. At the same time, we will work towards meeting critical national economic policy goals.

Our government is focused on positioning Canada to thrive in an uncertain world. Budget 2022 takes steps to create an environment that spurs the investments we need to grow our economy, create new, good-paying jobs for Canadians, and grow & strengthen the middle class.

Visit francescosorbara.libparl.ca/budget2022 to learn more about Budget 2022 and the measures in it that will directly benefit Vaughan-Woodbridge residents.

Francesco Sorbara

Member of Parliament for Vaughan-Woodbridge

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A portrait of Marie Henein, a woman with short dark hair, wearing a blue and red patterned scarf, resting her chin on her hand.

*Criminal defence lawyer
and litigator on why a good
defence still counts*

Rule of Law is a cornerstone of democracy: Marie Henein

by Canadian Lawyer Magazine

The question criminal defence lawyers get asked often comes in many forms, with different words trying to get at an answer in different ways, says Marie Henein.

When you hire a lawyer, do you expect them to represent your interest and yours alone? If the public believes you are guilty of a crime or that your cause is wrong, should you still be able to hire a lawyer? What would happen if we decided that the wrong people or causes shouldn't be allowed to have legal representation?

But if you distill these queries to their basic elements, says the very experienced Toronto lawyer who has taken on many "notorious" cases in her career, the question that's really being asked is: "How can you be so amoral? Or immoral?"

Speaking at the Law Society of B.C.'s annual "Rule of Law" lecture recently, Henein went on to say, "It is a question that tells us a great deal about why it is being asked and where we are in our democratic process and society. It's worse than a wrong question. It's a dangerous one."

She added: "I don't know anyone who went to law school, struggled through seven years of education, incurred all sorts of debt, with the goal of doing the most immoral job that they could think of. For 30 years, it didn't even occur to me to question my choice of profession, or my morality, for that matter, just as I expected, it did not occur to most young law students just trying to figure their way through. Really, and truly, nobody asked me this question for years. But nowadays, it seems that it is the only question people want to ask."

Provocative words indeed, but Henein, who has defended several high-profile cases, including Michael Bryant, Vice-Ad-

miral Mark Norman, and Jian Ghomeshi is not one to mince words. She recently released her memoir *Nothing But the Truth*, which weaves her personal story with her strongly held views on society's most pressing issues, legal and otherwise.

In an interview a day after her lecture to the B.C. law society, Henein says that when these types of questions come from the "ordinary citizen," she believes they are likely asking because they probably don't "have all the information - so it is understandable that they would have questions."

Therefore, as a criminal defence lawyer, Henein says there is an obligation to "engage and inform the public about how the system works and what we're trying to achieve." But when these questions are asked by people in government, "who are legislators and who are in the executive branch, and who should know the judicial branch's role, that is very troubling."

That lack of comprehension is troubling in a democratic society, Henein says, as it serves the purpose of "trying to tear down one of the checks on authority and to delegitimize the judicial branch of government." And that is the road to autocracy, Henein says. She points to evidence in places such as Russia, Afghanistan, and Syria, where the "rule of law" has been very much compromised – you start trying to convince people that you're illegitimate, and all these other institutions are illegitimate.

Henein also discusses the animosity towards so-called "loopholes" in the law, especially when it comes to constitutional rights.

"When you're talking about constitutional rights, that's not a loophole," she says. "We all have the right to be sitting in our homes and not have the cops bust down our doors with a warrant. We all enjoy that protection. We all enjoy those limitations on government authority."

Henein adds, however, that when the police break down your door and find nothing, it doesn't lead to litigation or

criminal procedures. “It’s always in the context of the police breaking in and finding something and charging that person,” she says. If the defence argues that breaking in without a warrant is against the constitution, “that’s not a loophole. That’s asserting your rights under the Charter.”

Henein says one of her concerns about society’s discussion today about the role of criminal defence lawyers, who have taken a lot of heat for defending people the public has decided are guilty, is the impact it is having on young lawyers and whether they should practice criminal law.

“When they see criminal defence lawyers being vilified, what these young law students are hearing is what they will potentially be subjected to,” she says. “If you’re going to have to constantly defend what you do, you just might think why bother doing it at all.”

Lawyers who go into criminal law, either as prosecutors or defence lawyers, typically don’t do it for the money, Henein says, noting the pay is a lot higher on Bay Street. “So, you’re doing it for another reason. But when you come up against all the obstacles - having to run your own business on your own, lack of mentoring - when you add to that being denigrated, some might think ‘why do it’ at all.”

Lawyers who go into criminal law, either as prosecutors or defence lawyers, typically don’t do it for the money, Henein says, noting the pay is a lot higher on Bay Street. “So, you’re doing it for another reason. But when you come up against all the obstacles - having to run your own business on your

own, lack of mentoring - when you add to that being denigrated, some might think ‘why do it’ at all.”

Henein also wants to make it clear that support for the “me too” movement is not inconsistent with having a criminal justice system that is fair and based on the proposition that those charged are innocent until proven guilty. Checks and balances in our judicial system are core to a democratic society.

The “me too” movement, she says, “has a lot of value and deals and brings to light various issues and attitudinal changes needed to deal with things like sexual abuse – that is entirely appropriate.”

However, “that doesn’t mean you have to throw away the presumption of innocence and not preserve fundamental values – it’s not an either-or proposition. They are not inconsistent. The two ideas can co-exist.”

And to answer the questions mentioned at the B.C. law society’ Rule of Law lecture, Henein says this:

When you hire a lawyer, do you expect them to represent your interest and yours alone? Yes, that is our job.

If the public believes you are guilty of a crime or that your cause is wrong, should you still be able to hire a lawyer? Yes, nobody can be deprived of representation and the right to have their case heard before an impartial judge.

What would happen if we decided that the wrong people or causes shouldn’t be allowed to have legal representation? We would give up our democracy and put ourselves on a path that we will forever regret.



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Michael Tibollo, Community Champion and Activist

by *Angelo Filoso*

Michael Tibollo is a son, husband, father, lawyer, addictions counsellor and dedicated community activist who has been advocating on behalf of the people and families of Vaughan-Woodbridge as their Member of Provincial Parliament. However, his journey to becoming a politician is unlike any other.

As Michael often says, “Family is the very foundation of who you are as a person.” His parents, Saverio and Francesca Tibollo came to Canada in 1958, knowing Canada was a land of great opportunity and possibility. They sacrificed everything in the hopes of creating a better future for their children.

Like so many other Canadians of Italian Heritage from his generation, Michael’s parents came to this country without money and could not speak English. All they had was their strong willingness to work. They made every sacrifice necessary to ensure a better life for themselves and their children.

First residing in Toronto’s Little Italy, Michael’s family eventually moved to Toronto’s Lawrence and Dufferin neighborhood, where he attended St. Charles Borromeo Catholic School. Through his education and learning from his parents, Michael was taught to be responsible with finances and become more involved in his community.

Following elementary school, Michael attended St. Michael’s College School prior to attending the University of Toronto where he graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Political Science and Economics. In 1985, Michael received a law degree from the University of Windsor and was called to the bar of the Law Society of Upper Canada in 1987. Michael has also completed certificates in negotiation and mediation from Harvard Law School. Since entering politics,

Michael has also received certifications in mental health and addictions, and is now CACCF-certified in Addictions Counselling, Indigenous Land-Based Healing, Tele-Mental Health, and Recovery Coaching.

Passionate about helping people struggling with mental health and addictions challenges, Michael is currently enrolled in the California Southern University’s Clinical Psychology PhD program.

Michael is the proud husband to Silvana – a retired French teacher of 35 years. He is also the father to three children – Frances, Michael Jr., and Mercedes. Frances, their eldest, and Michael Jr., followed in their father’s footsteps by practicing law. The youngest child, Mercedes, is completing her master’s degree in Biomedical Ethics and in September will begin medical school.

Michael and Silvana have passed down the importance of hard work, dedication, and giving back to the community that raised them. The family often spends their time volunteering for non-profit organizations throughout the GTA, as well as at home in Vaughan-Woodbridge. As a result of his community



Community activist Michael Tibollo meets with the Indigenous women healing circle

involvement, Michael learned more about other cultures, and is fluent in English, Italian, French, German and Spanish.

Michael's father, Saverio, passed away twenty-five years ago; however, his mother Francesca supports Michael in all his endeavors. Michael has two siblings, Nicholas, a litigation lawyer in Vaughan-Woodbridge, and Lavinia, who is a French teacher. Michael is fortunate to have a family that supports his political endeavors, as well as his candidacy for the upcoming provincial election.

During the pandemic, Michael's work as an MPP and as a volunteer in his community never slowed down. Early in the pandemic, Michael joined his daughter Frances, who started the "Pasta It Forward" campaign. Pasta It Forward provided over 75,000 meals free of charge to people and families in need during the pandemic, including thousands of seniors who were struggling to get by in the face of a global pandemic.



A visit to Vita Nova with Vaughan Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua and front line workers

As Michael became more active in the community, he eventually volunteered for Caritas alongside its founder, Father Gianni Carparelli. It was at Caritas, where Michael discovered his passion for helping those struggling with mental health and addiction challenges. He quickly realized that more had to be done by all levels of government if non-profit organizations, like Caritas, were ever going to improve their services and support more clients. Following years of mismanagement by the previous Liberal government, Michael decided to leave his law practice and start making a difference in the community on a much grander scale.

Michael Tibollo became an active member of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario to improve the quality of life for the people and families of Vaughan-Woodbridge. Michael's activism inspired the changes he believed needed to take place in government policy to finally address the economic and mental health issues existing in the community following 15 years of mismanagement by the previous Liberal government. In 2018, Michael decided to run as the PC Party candidate for Vaughan-Woodbridge and received 50.5 percent of the votes cast and nearly 8,000 more votes than his opponent. The community clearly put their trust in Michael, and he has been serving as their MPP ever since.

After declaring victory on June 7 2018, Michael was appointed into Doug Ford's cabinet as Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services (now Office of the Solicitor General). During his tenure in this portfolio, Michael met with several stakeholders and many front-line



Celebrating important women in his life. mom and wife

workers, in particular, first responders, who were suffering from numerous mental health challenges such as PTSD, anxiety and depression. During his tenure as the Solicitor General of Ontario, Michael initiated the "Centre of Excellence for First Responders" which is a place where first responders will be able to seek specialized care to address their mental health challenges. Following his time as Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Michael became Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Sport where he worked on collaborating with the ROM, AGO and Ontario Place, among others.

Michael felt passionately for mental health awareness regardless of the ministries he was placed in. He was convinced that more could be done for the community. Michael approached Premier Doug Ford with these concerns, and with his knowledge and experience Michael became the first Associate Minister for Mental Health and Addictions. It was at this Ministry, Michael released the province's Roadmap to Wellness, the province's action-oriented plan to finally build a connected and comprehensive mental health and addictions system. Roadmap to Wellness is backed by the government's historic \$3.8 billion commitment over 10 years.

In 2019, Michael was finally appointed to the portfolio he always wanted, and became Ontario's very first Minister Responsible for Mental Health and Addictions. Since receiving this portfolio on June 20, 2019, Michael has travelled across Ontario to meet stakeholders in their communities to better understand their needs. Most recently, on February 11, Premier Doug Ford gave \$90 million to Michael's ministry to invest in almost 400 new addictions treatment beds, meaning over 7000 people will receive care for their addictions challenges every year. Michael has worked tirelessly during the pandemic to face these challenging times when people's mental health was affected most. Michael spent his time analyzing past models that failed, and found new and innovative ways to develop transformational models of care that continue to generate positive impacts on the

Feature Story

workers, in particular, first responders, who were suffering from numerous mental health challenges such as PTSD, anxiety and depression. During his tenure as the Solicitor General of Ontario, Michael initiated the "Centre of Excellence for First Responders" which is a place where



Visiting Local school to address children and youth mental health

Feature Story

mental health of so many Ontarians.

As a champion of mental health, a Minister, and a beloved community member, Michael Tibollo has been recognized by his peers and has received many awards. Including: the Queen's Jubilee, Government of Canada 125 Medal, Recipient CHIN Radio TV Ethno-Cultural Honorees, Order of the Republic of Italy, Ordine al Merito award from the

National Congress of Italian Canadians Toronto-District, Professional Excellence award from CIBPA, the Humanitarian Award from Italy, and countless other community-based service awards for his volunteerism and philanthropy.

In the last four years, despite the unforeseen challenges of the pandemic, Minister Michael Tibollo along with the Ford government has accomplished more than any previous government with their innovation and dedication. Michael is seeking re-election because he believes his job is not finished and much more can be done to support the people of Vaughan-Woodbridge.

As we approach the next election, Michael has made it his priority to do whatever it takes to cut the red tape and bureaucratic inefficiencies that are holding back Ontarians from buying homes and driving up the cost of homes. He knows young families, seniors and hardworking Ontarians are desperate for housing that meets their unique needs. Michael and the government have already made life more affordable and convenient for over eight million vehicle owners by eliminating licence plate renewal fees and the requirement to have a licence plate sticker for passenger vehicles, light-duty trucks, motorcycles and mopeds. In addition, Michael and the government have introduced legislation that would, if passed, cut the gas tax by 5.7 cents per litre and the fuel tax by 5.3 cents per litre for six months



Environmentalist Michael Tibollo "Beekeeper"

As we approach the next election, Michael has made it his priority to do whatever it takes to cut the red tape and bureaucratic inefficiencies that are holding back Ontarians from buying homes and driving up the cost of homes. He knows young families, seniors and hardworking Ontarians are desperate for housing that meets their unique needs. Michael and the government have already made life more affordable and convenient for over eight million vehicle owners by eliminating licence plate renewal fees and the requirement to have a licence plate sticker for passenger vehicles, light-duty trucks, motorcycles and mopeds. In addition, Michael and the government have introduced legislation that would, if passed, cut the gas tax by 5.7 cents per litre and the fuel tax by 5.3 cents per litre for six months



Minister Tibollo with Pope Francis



The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and Premier Doug Ford with Michael Tibollo

beginning July 1, 2022.

In these four years, the Ford government has created more jobs than any other government. Recently, Michael and the government announced that with the support of the Ontario, federal and municipal governments, LG Energy Solution and automaker Stellantis are joining forces to build the province's first large-scale electric vehicle (EV) battery manufacturing plant in Windsor. The government also recently announced that they are supporting a more than \$2 billion investment by General Motors of Canada with up to \$259 million in grant support to transform the company's Oshawa and CAMI manufacturing plants, as well as improvements across all of GM's manufacturing and R&D facilities in the province. These investments will pave the way for GM's first electric vehicle (EV) production line in Ontario in Ingersoll and the continuation of vehicle production in Oshawa, while ensuring the vehicles of the future are built in Ontario and sold across North America. On top of all this, minimum wage is increasing in Ontario to \$15.50, in hopes that young people have the tools and resources they need to stay and thrive right here at home, in Ontario.

Michael Tibollo has worked diligently for the citizens of Vaughan-Woodbridge and has used his voice to fight for our community. Michael hopes to continue serving the citizens of Vaughan-Woodbridge. Michael's education, his experience, and his commitment has aided him in accomplishing many goals in the last four years, and he will continue to do so upon re-election. Michael is committed to achieving a better quality of life for the citizens of Vaughan-Woodbridge.

Michael Tibollo is truly the champion of mental health, seniors, and the people and families of Vaughan-Woodbridge.



Michael with members of the Woodbridge community



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Beata Antonious is a registered massage therapist who has special training in Manual Lymphatic Drainage. She has been offering manual lymphatic drainage for over a decade. The Vodder technique that she was trained in is recognized in the medical community and many of her clients are referred by the major cancer hospitals, and plastic surgeons for this type of treatment. Referrals are not required for treatment.

Manual lymphatic drainage is extremely beneficial for individuals who have undergone cancer care, lymphedema, surgeries, as well as for reduction in inflammation and toxins, water retention, bloating, irritable bowel syndrome, fibromyalgia, increasing better digestion, and calming down the nervous system. It is highly recommended for individuals who are feeling tired or puffy, in need of boosting the immune system, and speeding up healing. Overall, manual lymphatic drainage is suitable for anyone aiming to improve their overall health.

The Vodder technique that Beata uses for lymphatic drainage is a gentle method consisting of rhythmical and

precise movements that are applied to specific areas of the body to aid in collecting and moving lymphatic fluid. Its main goal is to stimulate the lymph glands, guiding the lymphatic fluid back to the circulatory system, helping to flush out fluid excess and waste.

It is important to be treated by a health practitioner who is certified in manual lymphatic drainage in order to benefit from this treatment and avoid further complications. Lymphatic drainage is contraindicated when experiencing infections, open wounds, thrombosis, high blood pressure, heart, liver, and kidney failure. Manual lymphatic drainage can be incorporated as part of ongoing and post cancer care treatment with the permission of the oncologist.

As mentioned, Beata Antonious has many years of experience working with individuals with compromised lymphatic systems and bettering their health at all stages of life. In addition to the lymphatic treatment, she provides her clients with home care instructions and suggestions which are customized. Lymphatic drainage and helping her clients see results with this gentle method is her passion. She practices in Woodbridge at a wonderful, all female clinic called Essential Chiropractic & Massage Therapy.

Beata Antonious, RMT, Massage Therapist

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WANTED: Productivity and Innovation, REWARD: Economic Growth

by *The Honourable Tony Loffreda, CPA*
Independent Canadian Senator (Quebec)

“Our third pillar for growth is a plan to tackle the Achilles heel of the Canadian economy: productivity and innovation.” This is what Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland said when she tabled Budget 2022 on April 7th. It was a surprising and candid admission that Canada has a productivity growth issue.

Some argue that the Canadian economy is thriving, and we have many reasons to be optimistic: the unemployment rate is 5.3% and our real GDP is more than a full percentage point above pre-pandemic levels. This is great news, but what’s the forecast and how do we measure up to other countries?

According to projections from a recent OECD report, Canada ranks last in terms of real GDP per capita between 2021 and 2060. Budget 2022 also lays out some projections on the future state of the economy, noting that the real GDP growth rate between 1970-2021 was 2.6%, and it is expected to drop to 2.5% between 2022-2026, and then to 1.7% between 2027-2055.

But why is productivity growth so important?

In simple terms, growing Canada’s productivity means working more efficiently and smarter by increasing capital investments, favouring skills development for workers, and investing in technological innovation. For example, we know that Canadian businesses only invest 50 cents per worker for every dollar an American business invests in its own worker.

Productivity growth is also closely related to growth in our standard of living. Canada’s underwhelming productivity performance will make it difficult for future generations to enjoy the income growth that current generations have enjoyed.

In the Budget, the Government admits that “labour productivity growth in Canada has slowed from about 2.7% in the 1960s and 1970s to less than 1 today... [and] Canada has lagged behind other advanced economies in investing and adopting new and innovative technologies.” So, what can the Government do to enhance productivity in Canada?

To the Government’s credit, Budget 2022 has set out several policy initiatives that should help improve our growth trajectory. Three specific ones come to mind. First, the new Canada Growth Fund is being launched to attract substantial private sector investment to help meet certain economic policy goals. Second, the Government is hoping the just-announced Canadian Innovation and Investment Agency will help industries make the investments they need to innovate, create jobs, and be competitive in the changing global economy.

As Ms. Freeland said, the new Agency will give companies the tools and incentives they need to create and invent, and to take risks and grow. Finally, I also welcome the government’s decision to cut taxes for Canada’s SMEs which should allow them to reinvest these savings in their businesses.



These three initiatives have laudable goals, but don’t specifically and more narrowly address Canada’s productivity problems in a holistic way. Canada must do more and do better to improve business investment in innovation and technology, reduce barriers and help our businesses grow and, in so doing, help Canadians improve their standard of living. We cannot ignore the data: Canada is lagging its international counterparts and we must act now.

In last year’s budget, the Government acknowledged the need for increasing productivity and stated that “while no single initiative in this budget accomplished the government’s missions, the potential payoff from acting now in a broad range of policy areas is substantial, as measures tend to reinforce themselves over time and build momentum for further action to boost Canada’s growth trajectory.”

Fast-forward one year later and Budget 2022, in my view, falls short in addressing Canada’s productivity gap at its core. The Government needs a detailed plan. We need to further incentivize businesses to invest in new technologies, innovation, and perhaps above all, in its people. As the Coalition for a Better Future stated, “Budget 2022 is a good first step, but what we need urgently is a comprehensive long-term plan for economic growth that is inclusive and sustainable.” Indeed, the day before the Budget was tabled, I argued in the Senate that the Government needs a clear and concise strategy to boost Canada’s productivity – an action-plan with set priorities and targets, industry buy-in and the ability to track results.

As reported by RBC late last year, “to avoid missing out on investment, innovation and talent, Canada must take a closer look at the overall policy framework. Specifically, structural policy – tax, regulation, competition, infrastructure, education, innovation, and trade policy – must work in concert with sectoral strategies and government spending programs to address the challenges before us.”

In other words, the status quo is no longer acceptable. We need bold ideas that will make Canada the most attractive place to invest. I concede: the challenges before us are huge, even overwhelming, but not addressing them and finding tailored solutions is a risk we can’t afford.

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Reimagine the Possibilities

by *Mark Pagliaroli*

The Maple branch of Vaughan Public Libraries is finally ready to reopen its doors on April 26 after an extensive renovation over a year in the making. The \$4.1 million dollar project consisted of a complete overhaul of the space, and has now been reimagined as a contemporary, brighter, and more welcoming spot for the community to enjoy. With a revamp project as vast as this, the uncertainties of the pandemic made the process far more challenging than it should have been. Enhanced protocols for workers and shortage of materials were just a few of the reasons on top of the regular hurdles hard labour usually presents.

It's been a long road as there is a rich history behind Maple, and it may come as a surprise that this is Maple Library's third iteration of the branch. Once upon a time, the library was housed in a cozy 4000 square foot building on Merino Rd, just a few minutes South of where it is now at 10190 Keele St. Photo archives show lively staff assisting customers, hosting events and programs for children, surrounded by charming yellow walls and brown carpet in a beautifully nostalgic backdrop of the 1970s and 80s. That building is now occupied by Maple Lions Club as is often used as a senior's centre.

In 1991, the library was relocated to its current building, attached to Maple Community Centre, and was likely renowned for being a public space complete with access

to the world wide web! Most Millennials who grew up in the area would remember a decorative and homey atmosphere, accented with brick walls and purple toned carpet that remained when they brought their own kids in some thirty years later. Now the branch, along with the library system itself, has evolved and adapted to contemporary needs.

So, what can we expect at the new reimagined Maple Library? It offers a refreshed children's area and a new reading garden which perfectly complements the leafy-green theme throughout the interior. The new look is symbolic of VPL's commitment to adapt and change while offering an incredible array of free programs, services and resources. The April 26 grand re-opening is sure to have a big turnout now that Covid restrictions have been lifted. The Hon. Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua, along with members of council, and the Vaughan Public Library board will be present for a ceremonial ribbon cutting.

This will be the first of a few ribbon cuttings in the coming years since VPL has had and will continue to have a lot on the slate. Recently, the Mackenzie Health Vaughan Library opened in the Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital. VMC and VMC Express Libraries will soon open in the YMCA building, followed by renovations at Woodbridge Library and Bathurst Clark Library. VPL will expand further with the Carrville Library and West Woodbridge Library as well. An impressive tree of achievements in a short amount of time!

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A man and his son watch an evacuation train with their relatives, mother, wife and three children depart to Lviv at Kyiv central train station in Kyiv, Ukraine, March 11, 2022.

How Life in Kyiv Changed in an Instant: ‘I Feel Like I Am in a Dream’

by *Lawrence Greenspon*

Kyiv, Ukraine — At the Brodsky Choral Synagogue in the heart of Kyiv, men cheerfully belt out Hebrew songs in the cold, cheered on by a small crowd.

In the midst of a war-torn landscape, this is a rare moment of light. Houses of worship are almost all shuttered for ordinary services; instead they’ve been transformed into evacuation meeting points and shelters for the displaced and desperate.

“I never thought this could happen here,” says Moshe Azman, chief rabbi of Ukraine. “I feel like I am in a dream.”

For those who remain in Kyiv, life has been reduced to the almost constant sound of artillery booming in the distance, the whirl of air-raid sirens compelling citizens to rush to the nearest bunker or parking lot below the earth. Indeed, the tension is palpable as Russian tanks inch closer. Almost everyone you know has lost someone, is missing someone, or cannot reach a loved one trapped in a Ukrainian town completely cut off from electricity, communication, food, medical supplies, running water, and heat amid the frozen temperatures.

Yet there is a profound pragmatism to Ukrainians, who have embraced their reality with determination, holding on to the serene lives they lived just over two weeks ago, while simultaneously letting the past go.

“In less than a week, I adapted to war. I changed my clothes and became a driver for the volunteers,” notes Oleksandr Klymenko, snaking through the empty Kyiv streets at sundown. “Our lives changed so quickly; I changed so quickly.”

The once vibrant capital city of 2.8 million has been entirely transformed into a frontline military zone. Streets are dotted with sandbagged checkpoints; vehicles must zigzag between concrete chunks and around World War II-style “steel hedgehogs” designed to puncture or belly-up encroaching enemies. Civilians tape large X’s to the window and leave them just a crack open despite the frigid

temperatures, believing it will limit the splattering of glass shards should a blast strike.

Kyiv is consumed by war. Everyone plays a part somehow. There are the soldiers, the volunteer soldiers, the women who cook the meals for the soldiers, and the medics who leave their own families to live in cold basements — on call 24/7 and ready to run to the wounded at a moment’s notice. Famous chefs with shuttered restaurants now bake bread and concoct borscht for the fighters out in the bitter cold. Travel agents have transformed into communication vessels to find information about escape routes, convoys, and casualties.

Bright yellow school buses that once shuttled students across town on the edges of the city are now stuffed with exhausted, traumatized faces of evacuees pulled from broken towns after days of endless bombardment. There are buses whizzing down allegedly “green corridors” to “transition points,” where agonized faces are left with their suitcases, trying to wrap their heads around where to go next with no safe haven.

I see a teen boy, so young his gaunt face is still mottled by adolescent acne, standing by himself in the mud in an open field as evacuation buses from the outskirts of the city arrive. For hours, he watches each one intently, holding up a sign with his mother’s name — the kind of sign you see a driver holding at the airport baggage claim — waiting for that familiar face. The sky darkens, and the bombing grows louder, closer, and still he stays waiting. The boy does not know if his family has survived the wild thrashing of the Russians.

Nearby, the very young, disabled, elderly, and confused cross the blown-up Irpin bridge — reeling with pain and unable to fathom the nightmare that has become their broken, homeless lives. Some are so old, so pained that they are bent double and barely able to walk, oblivious to the haunting artillery booms that seem to be growing closer and closer.

The destroyed Irpin bridge in Kyiv. (Hollie McKay)

“We’re poor and powerless,” one woman, Ana, 23, tells me as she loads her babushka (grandmother) onto a stretcher of a local rescue ambulance. “Why?”

She sounded strong, but she was no doubt psychologically wounded, pacing up and down outside a parking lot littered with shell casings and debris.

Children who have already endured years of lockdowns amid the

Covid-19 pandemic are out of school again, with no concept of when they may return to a classroom. Occasionally, I see small boys and girls wrapped in winter woolens playing in the snow as if caught in a serene bubble — until sirens again crack the air and parents whisk them away.

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Each day, notifications pop up alerting citizens as to which markets and pharmacies across the city will be opened and for what hours. People cluster on upswept and snowy street corners, waiting to enter in small groups for essentials. Shelves are mostly wiped clean, with few imports making it into the capital as the war drags into its third week. In search of shampoo, I scour the city center for every open market. After hours of searching, I finally uncover a dust-lathered bottle of laundry detergent, clutching it with excitement, as if it were trimmed in gold.

The luxuries of Uber or even the crammed subway system belong to a time before the war. One local taxi application called Uklon still functions, although the cars are limited. Instead, I see women all alone most mornings, dragging sleighs of supplies up the steep cobblestone hills to get them through the next days or weeks.

“Look!” says my friend Kirill, who was supposed to be graduating from film school this month but instead is toting a rifle in camouflage clothing, having just joined the civilian “Territorial Defenses” military wing. “Did you see that man carrying eggs? I can’t believe it. I wonder where he found eggs.”

It’s the small salvages of the past that Ukrainians often long for the most: a steaming espresso from a trendy café, posting a letter, being able to buy an extra sweater as the temperature tumbles, a stiff drink to dull the anxiety.

Given the imposition of martial law the day the full-scale war flared, the sale of alcohol was immediately prohibited, and it remains locked in cases inside fast-emptying stores. One Ukrainian friend explains that this is because scores of men have voluntarily taken up arms to fight for the freedom of their land. The remaining Ukrainian males aged 18–60 are banned from leaving the country and must be willing to serve if needed.

“We can’t have big groups of men with guns and ready for the fight if alcohol is still widely available,” the friend says.

Roped-off liquor in a Kyiv store. (Hollie McKay)

Another insists that they must no longer call “vodka” by that Russian name, mandating that Ukrainians now use “horilka” in the motherland’s tongue.

Beyond a handful of depleted grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, and a few hotels to house foreign journalists and aid workers, nothing else is open. Early in the morning and late at night, I see wearied volunteer fighters with rifles strapped around their chests come to the hotel restaurant for a much-needed warm meal. When I venture downstairs in the darkness, I see them sleeping on thick chairs in the hotel lobby.

The ATMs are without cash, although most places in the city continue to accept card payments. Curfew comes into play between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m., meaning any unauthorized vehicle runs the risk of being shot at by Ukrainian guards. As with the night sky, houses are also blacked out with lights lowered to dim levels and curtains firmly drawn to avoid alerting potential enemies.

I meet a lovely young IT professional named Jen. Although a paraplegic, confined to a wheelchair and unable to use her arms, Jen uses a long straw between her lips to operate an iPad and uses her skills to report Russian hacks and disinformation channels.

The professional workforce of Kyiv has ground to a halt. Most civilians I talk to say their companies still pay their salaries, but men

say they must take up arms with the Territorial Defense Force to keep their paycheck.

On another grey afternoon, I met a group of widows, grandmas, and old women hovering around the courtyard of their apartment building in central Kyiv preparing bottles and bottles of Molotov cocktails.

“My best weapon is my hands,” Larissa, 60, says, her voice trembling but energized. “I will hit a Russian soldier with everything I have. I am not going anywhere.”

They learned to make the notorious Molotov on the Internet. They cannot believe that their lives are centered on making amateur firebombs.

In the midst of the madness and chaos, there is also a collective drive for some semblance of order to control the things that are still in their control.

“It’s important to park the car right,” another friend Igor boasts, checking his distance to the curb on a vast and barren Kyiv Street. “Even in war, when there are no police, these little things matter.” Nevertheless, lives are halted in time. People cannot make plans or begin to think about what the future holds.

“I was supposed to graduate from film school next month,” a Finnish-Ukrainian named Lukas says with a shrug. “I don’t think it will ever happen.”

However, he is not bitter and does not complain. It makes no sense to complain. Instead, Lukas documents what he can with a handheld video camera. He weighs whether he can better serve his people by telling the world about the atrocities or by joining the armed forces. Lives are halted but they are also frequently interrupted. The air-raided warnings ring out at all hours of the night and day, and the people of Kyiv have amended once cold and dusty bunkers into mini makeshift homes with stored water and canned food and thin mattresses to sleep on. No one knows how long you might need to spend there — maybe ten minutes, maybe ten hours.

To cross from the east side to the west side of the city is an expedition taking more than four hours each way, as checkpoints and road closures and document checks snag the way. But, again, it makes no sense to grow irritated. Billboards along the journey used to advertise fancy hotels and spa-service getaways. Now, they come with war-centric signs such as “NATO, close the skies” and warnings to the Russian invaders that they will be “greeted with bullets, not flowers.”

One moment, the local you are talking to appears calm and collected. The next comes an outburst of anger and then tears. People cannot believe that their homeland is being plunged into conventional 20th-century war in the 21st century.

The Ukrainian soldiers do not want glory or medals or money or fame. They want their freedom; they want their lives as they were a couple of weeks ago, although they know deep down nothing will ever be the same again.

“I took my wife and children to the Polish border and then came back to fight,” one volunteer, Oleski, 29, tells me from a quiet street near the presidential buildings that were once a vibrant attraction, boasting Ukraine’s most treasured and historical sites. “It is easier for us to fight harder when we know our families are safe, that someone else is taking care of them.”

Almost everyone is defiant in assuring me that Ukraine will win this war. Nobody wants to imagine what would happen if they do not. “We will never give in, never,” adds Gennadiy Druzenko, a lawyer-turned-medic and co-founder of the Pirogov First Volunteer Mobile Hospital. “This war will become a guerrilla war and will go on for a very long time.”

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What the Future Holds

by *Remax Canada*

Extraordinary housing activity over the past two years has caused a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety among many Canadian homebuyers, sellers, and those who aspire to enter the market. To help ease some of the worries and concerns that come with today's social and economic volatility, *we wanted to give Canadians more long-term context and clarity - to be more informed - about their most precious possession and one of their most valued assets,"* says Christopher Alexander, President, RE/MAX Canada.

Scenarios that could potentially upset the housing market:

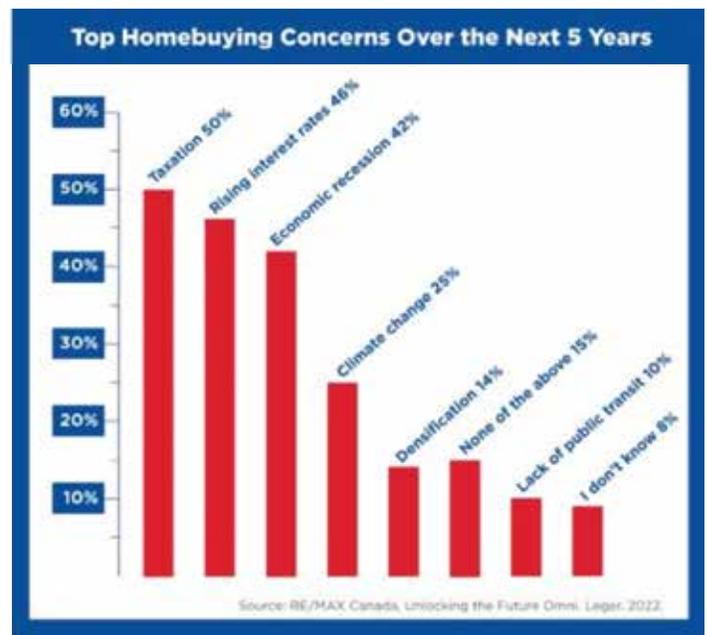
- 1) Bank of Canada overreach in fighting inflation,
- 2) Politicians fail to tie immigration policy to our labour market needs,
- 3) Our governments seek to rein-in deficits with aggressive new taxes.

Key takeaways:

- Interest rate increases at a reasonable schedule of four times a year would create a stable and more relaxed housing market over the next five years.
- Current immigration policy is focused significantly on accepting new Canadians on the basis of their economic and social capital characteristics (i.e., education, French/English language skills, and previous Canadian work or study experience).
- While the deployment of taxes such as the *foreign buyer's tax* has been front and centre over the last few years as a tactic to calm Canada housing market prices, *removing the exemption on capital gains for principal residences* could have a greater impact on market disruption.

According to a Leger survey commissioned by RE/MAX Canada as part of the report:

- Over the next five years, Canadians said taxation, rising interest rates, and the possibility of an economic recession rank as their top three worries when it comes to buying a home. (see graph below)
- Thinking ahead five years, 37% of Canadians say their preferred community would be suburban, while 30% want to live in an urban environment, and 27% say rural.
- 61% of Canadians agree that real estate is the best long-term investment they could make (which they don't see changing over the next five-years), however, rising property-related taxes (64%), rising interest rates (58%) and a possible capital gains tax (55%) are factors that would cause barriers or concerns when it comes to buying a home in that time frame.



** RE/MAX Canada and its collaborators on this report are not trying to predict the future, but rather just model some different versions of it for the collective benefit of Canadians.

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