

Regional action on GTA investment and jobs needed, says CivicAction

Business and civic leaders are calling for a regional team effort to attract investment and jobs to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). They are citing the Roadmap to Revitalization, a report on the state of foreign direct investment (FDI) attraction and regional cooperation. Commissioned by the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance (GTMA), the report was developed in conjunction with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), with the support of an advisory group, and under the auspices of CivicAction.

"We've had some success bringing investment here and have coordinated to a degree, but it's time to catch up with what regions like Greater Montreal and Greater London (U.K.) are doing to attract investment," said GTMA Co-Chair and Chair of CivicAction John Tory.

The GTA has many strengths in its favour, such as location, size, leading industry clusters, and a talented workforce, but it is underperforming relative to its potential, the report concluded.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) helps drive economic growth, and the GTA is a key engine for the country's FDI performance, representing 52 per cent of FDI in Ontario and 24 per cent in Canada. But, Canada's global market share of FDI is declining. And, the Toronto region is not keeping pace with other regions that are competing aggressively for foreign investments and the jobs that they bring.

The report included case studies of high-performing FDI attraction agencies in other regions and how they drive success. These regional organizations were generating about eight times as many FDI projects as the GTMA in relation to the size of the local economy. They were also funded on average at four times the level of the GTMA.

A strong regional body could pursue and attract even more companies to the Toronto region. Tory called for partners to work together to act on these findings.

"A properly funded, collaborative regional organization is essential," he said.

"Municipalities want to work together with private sector partners and other levels of government to make sure we're out there globally, showcasing every part of the region as great places for companies to locate," Pickering Mayor and GTMA Co-Chair Dave Ryan observed.

Since 1997, the GTMA has helped more than 100 new foreign companies locate in the GTA. These investments have generated over \$440 million in GDP, or \$4.4 million on average for each project. If a sustainable, competitive level of funding were secured and the organization restructured to achieve increased results, the potential impact on the region's economy would be significant.

The report can be downloaded at www.greatertoronto.org/publications