

Prosperity Roundtable Summary & Discussion Paper



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BACKGROUND

Serving the community for 130 years, Brampton Board of Trade is the go to organization where businesses of all sectors, convene, collaborate and create solutions to boost regional economic prosperity. It provides solutions to the toughest problems businesses face every day including overcoming barriers to growth, attracting and retaining talent and making the right connections.

As part of its role, Brampton Board of Trade consults with business representatives through a number of meeting formats including site visits, forums, roundtable discussions, networking events, committees and task forces. For a number of years, the Board has put emphasis on getting feedback from large employers. Its first Prosperity Roundtable was held in 2015.

At the 2016 Prosperity Roundtable, business leaders identified a number of issues impacting the success of the regional economy. This year's roundtable focused on the challenges and opportunities associated with transit and /transportation, investment attractiveness, talent and the next generation, trade and civic leadership.

The 2016 Roundtable, held in November, invited large employers to identify key actions for which they would hold themselves accountable to achieve over the next 5 years to help ensure Brampton's future economic success. These recommended actions were then reviewed, assessed and augmented by committees of the Board and received approval by its Board of Directors in January 2017.

Outlined in this report are the key issues covered at the November Prosperity Roundtable, opportunities to be pursued and action items to be implemented in a timely manner. The Board of Trade would like the conversation of Brampton's prosperity to continue. Each section contains a number of questions. The Brampton Board of Trade encourages readers to provide more feedback on their perspective.

Through its dedicated Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and partners, the Board of Trade will work collaboratively to incorporate the issues outlined in this document into its advocacy agenda and strategic planning to ensure Brampton moves forward.

TRANSIT & TRANSPORTATION

Defining The Challenge

An effective, efficient, and regionally connected transit and transportation system is the backbone of a strong and competitive economy and livable city. In the modern economy the two concepts of competitiveness and livability are intrinsically related. Maximizing both concepts requires the ability to move people and goods as productively as possible.

Brampton needs to be a modern city that reflects the robust and diverse complexion of its population and business community. The future must include various businesses of all industries (healthcare, technology, manufacturing, transportation, etc.) existing in harmony, all with a focus on creating a livable, prosperous, and environmentally conscious Brampton. Only when livability rankings, business rankings, and environmental rankings consistently place Brampton at the top of their respective lists will the desired state be achieved.

Critical factors to achieve the goal of a high-functioning, competitive, and modern city include the ability to move people and goods through efficient transportation and effective regional transportation routes. Consideration of issues such as density, livability, scalability, and commercial attractiveness are all imperative when planning and building transportation and transit infrastructure.

Effective leadership at all levels of government is required to create the required transit and transportation system. The focus of these leaders must be on achieving regional, not just local, goals. This requires co-ordination between government and groups such as the leadership on Canada's Innovation Corridor, Global Cities Council, and the Brampton Board of Trade.

What is Currently Being Done

The BBOT is engaged on all aspects of the challenge. An active member of the Global Cities Council, BBOT is drawing on best practices from other national cities and engaging in advocacy to achieve results from the federal government. Recently, the BBOT has established itself as a leader on Canada's Innovation Corridor working group, working with business leaders and other chambers to establish an innovation corridor from Kitchener Waterloo to Toronto. Furthermore, the BBOT is providing input into Brampton's Economic Development Master Plan to ensure issues such as density, regional connectivity, and competitiveness are all given appropriate consideration.

Actions Moving Forward

1. Create a communication strategy targeting key elected officials representing all 4 levels of government with the objective of expressing the business community's expectation for them to adopt a collective vision, better alignment and consensus toward initiatives that will optimize Brampton's economic development.
2. Communicate to local MP and MPPs, the business community's expectation for fair share funding for Brampton.
3. Encourage the local economic development department to commission a report – a fair share tax transfer report – highlighting the gap between tax revenue collected from senior level governments and the transfers and investments back to Brampton.
4. Encourage more business representatives to increase their support of the Brampton Board of Trade as a trusted, informed and effective Brampton economic development champion.
5. Find an individual champion or group of individuals that BBOT can support as allies in the development of our regional economy.
6. Encourage the Brampton Board of Trade and elected leaders to identify, detail and advocate for specific economic development projects and funding.

Critical Success Factors

- Government participation
- Political consensus and a collective vision
- Funding from all levels of government
- A Champion
- Buy in of the collective vision from the business community
- Ensuring projects are shovel ready and Brampton is ready to make its case for funding
- Invest in Brampton's commercial transportation hub to maintain competitive advantage

Success Indicators

- Seamless mobility throughout Brampton and the region
- Increased public transit ridership
- Improved position on national rankings (i.e. MoneySense)
- Improved GDP Growth
- Better and wider industry representation

Questions for Consideration

- 1) Is this achievable and ultimately the goal?
- 2) What levels of government do you feel should be steering this discussion?
- 3) What other groups or organizations could benefit from or assist with increased engagement in the transportation infrastructure and logistics file?
- 4) What do you define as success for Brampton when thinking about transit, transportation, and infrastructure?

INVESTMENT ATTRACTIVENESS

Defining The Challenge

To make Brampton more commercially attractive, we must compete well on 5 general indicators: **1. Workforce; 2. Leadership; 3. Location; 4. Incentives; 5. Quality of Life.** Workforce needs to be available with education at all levels, but the greatest opportunities may exist at the middle of the educational spectrum. Brampton has more need of technologists than PhDs.

Effective marketing is essential in providing investors with a clear indication of why they should invest and in easing their path to do so. What is our value proposition? Our location is world class in terms of market population and infrastructure. National and provincial tax incentives exist, but don't differentiate Ontario municipalities and are outside of municipal control. Quality of Life is high but challenged by the pace of population growth and need to commute outside the city for jobs. Building more vibrant restaurant, art and cultural offerings is complicated by proximity to Toronto and other entertainment that is in near proximity.

Effective leadership by the private sector and at all levels of government is required to create an attractive environment for businesses to thrive in Brampton. Areas of concern:

- external image hampered by less than favourable headlines;
- property tax increases are comparatively high;
- we face significant deficiencies in commercial and office space compared to other west-GTA centres;
- employment lands require protection from conversion to residential;
- municipal government struggles to collaborate
- tech start-up community lacks critical mass in Brampton.
- Despite Brampton's exceptional location for business, it continues to under-perform in rankings: *livability*: rankings (114 of 209 Canadian municipalities); and *business attractiveness*: rankings (9th).

What is Currently Being Done

Brampton Board of Trade is continuing in an advocacy role in support of the key industry clusters development of emerging business districts such as the area around Peel Memorial Health Centre. The BBOT has highlighted the need for better collaboration, respect for taxpayers and understanding of competitive advantage at local Council. BBOT has encouraged less burden and tax on business and for action on key weaknesses in cost of doing business. Most recently, BBOT introduced the "I love Brampton" campaign this fall.

Actions Moving Forward

1. Clearly state the business community's expectation of mature leadership at city hall – leadership commensurate with one of Canada's major cities. Take steps to encourage fewer bad headlines from City Council and a more progressive and positive image in national media and beyond.
2. Develop a strategy that encourages a less-biased, more accurate and comprehensive approach to Brampton reporting in national media.
3. Rebrand our community as being collaborative, innovative and having trusted leadership.
4. Encourage a comprehensive marketing strategy targeting business publications (those that rank/list on criteria such as livability, business attractiveness); editorial boards; key investment and site location influencers.
5. More revenue must be generated from private sector to support Board of Trade efforts in implementing a 5-year Prosperity Agenda.
6. Find an individual champion or group of individuals that BBOT can support as allies in the development of our regional economy.
7. Better track and record economic development statistics and labour market information and make more accessible to investment decision-makers.
8. Better communicate the message that Brampton is the youngest, most-diverse and well-educated workforce in Canada.

Critical Success Factors

- Collaboration (High)
- City Leadership (High)
- Communication (High)
- Champions
- Private investment
- Government Connections (Medium)
- Risk-taking

Success Indicators

Branding:

- Rebranding of the city and an ongoing marketing campaign
- Research that indicates positive external perception
- Targeted resources
- Embrace multiculturalism and diversity
- Edgy – different – unique brand

Accessibility

- Traffic Control; Public Transit, Airport Links
- Hotels, WIFI / Digital

ROI

- Goals (Achievable)
- Stability / Predictable taxes & services; Incentives
- Talent Pool; Industrial & Office Space

Questions for Consideration

- 1) Describe what investment attractive looks like in Brampton's case
- 2) What would it take to become the Silicon Valley for Canada?
- 3) What are the next steps to develop Brampton as a tech hub in the innovation corridor?
- 4) What resources – human and financial – are required for the next steps?

TALENT & THE NEXT GENERATION

Defining The Challenge

There is a prevailing belief amongst young people that there is little economic and social opportunity for them in Brampton. With a need to increase access to post-secondary education, jobs and transit infrastructure, Brampton is not setting the stage for its youth to succeed and carry the community forward. This issue is compounded by the fact that our youth are educated, diverse and entrepreneurial – and therefore mobile. As we lose talent to other communities, employers will continue to struggle to find talent and community organizations will struggle to find fresh leadership.

There is not currently a source for nurturing the next generation of diverse community leaders. No specific recruitment strategy exists for recruiting young professionals for specialist positions in emerging industries like food, health sciences or logistics. The un- and under- employment of young people continue to be problematic.

Likewise, from an entrepreneurial perspective, the average age of business owners is increasing – the continuation of their businesses after their retirement is uncertain. There's no community resource to help entrepreneurs manage succession.

What's Currently Being Done

More can be done. The Brampton Board of Trade has adopted changes in its culture and nomination process to welcome new, young talent to its board and committees. A new/emerging leader forum of young community leaders has begun meeting regularly through the Board of Trade.

Actions Moving Forward

1. Create a plan of private sector engagement to better integrate values of post-secondary institutions, business and government
2. Develop initiatives that better engage (NextGen) business owners - those under 40 years old – in the future direction of Brampton's business and community development.
3. Create a plan to establish a mentoring program including sustainable 3-year funding for a software platform, staffing and marketing.
4. Showcase NextGen business talent in all media formats. Market the case for young entrepreneurs to create businesses and start/keep jobs in Brampton.
5. Enhance the "I Love Brampton" community pride campaign.

6. Advocate to the federal government the need to better align immigration policy with work visas to ensure Canadian employers can recruit international talent in a timely way.
7. Develop strategies that consistently place Brampton at the top of their respective lists of livability rankings, business rankings, and environmental rankings.
8. Raise the profile of Brampton's business, livability and environmental rankings.
9. Find an individual champion or group of individuals that BBOT can support as allies in the development of our regional economy.

Critical Success Factors

- Free access to space for young people to ideate, work on their ideas, get resources
- A broad-scale formalized mentorship program
- Local incentives for start-up businesses
- Better communication with younger audiences

Success Indicators

- A shift in attitudes; young people genuinely feel Brampton is a place they can be successful
- Higher employment rate
- Higher number of job placements, internships, co-ops
- Active Involvement and participation

Questions for Consideration

- 1) What does a talent-rich, next-generation innovation ecosystem look like?
- 2) How would we know we've achieved it?
- 3) What are the critical success factors to make your workplace and our community welcoming to the next generation?
- 4) Can you use your network to introduce young people to entrepreneurs and mentors?
- 5) What resources are available and required to move forward?

TRADE

Defining The Challenge

Comparatively, Canada's economic output represents only about 1.4% of global economic production. Likewise, Canada enjoys a well-paid, but comparatively small consumer base of only 32 Million residents. In recent years, economic growth has been sluggish, hovering around 2%, causing some to call it a slow growth trap.

The comparative size of its economy, its relatively small consumer base, and sluggish domestic growth, all point to exporting an important driver of economic growth for Canada.

While the lower Canadian dollar, proximity of U.S markets, similar business cultures and trade treaties (NAFTA) continue to provide a strong foundation for Canadian exporters seeking growth in the US, the market crisis of 2008-09 and resulting "Buy U.S" measures has also forced Canadian exporters to revisit their dependency on their largest trading partner and to more seriously explore opportunities beyond North America.

What Is Currently Being Done

At a pace of more than 200 documents per month, The Brampton Board of Trade currently provides export document validation services helping local businesses expedite sale of their goods across the border. The Board's International Trade Committee is a resource of approximately 30 businesses that meet monthly to learn more about international markets and provide support to one another in their export needs. Each year, the Board of Trade recognizes an International Ambassador during its Business Excellence Awards. This past year, Mayor Jeffrey participated in an Ontario Mission to Israel and the West Bank and will lead a trade mission to UAE, in which the Board of Trade helped facilitate. Ontario facilitates close to 100 business missions each year, of which Brampton businesses can participate. The Chair of the Board of Trade is active on a weekly basis developing relationships with agencies i.e. EDC, BDC, Trade Commissioner Services, and non-governmental trade groups to gather and share information to benefit local companies. Brampton Board of Trade is also actively involved in Global Cities Chamber Council, which is working co-operatively with business leaders in Canada's largest markets on innovative trade-enabling initiatives.

Actions Moving Forward

1. Create a communication strategy that better orients private sector and elected leaders on the global integration of supply chains.

2. Help Brampton businesses and elected officials better understand international trade information sources such as export websites; trade commission contacts etc.
3. Target key markets and build a positive municipal identity among Canadian and foreign trade and economic development officials.
4. Establish an annual plan of sector-specific networking and information sessions (Advanced Manufacturing; Logistics; Food & Beverage; Healthcare; ICT; Business Services)
5. Recruit more and better engage financial institutions with an international focus to support export development initiatives of the Brampton Board of Trade.
6. Find an individual champion or group of individuals that BBOT can support as allies in the development of our regional economy.
7. Facilitate hosting of in-bound delegations with the local Economic Development Office to attract investment.

Critical Success Factors

- Better familiarity with foreign supply chains
- Better understanding of Canadian assets on the ground
- Connecting Brampton clusters with foreign supply chains

Success Indicators

- Various levels of government required to be actively engaged
- Trade partnerships are better communicated with businesses and key stakeholders
- More awareness – tangible metrics and measurable goals

Questions for Consideration

- 1) What does the future of trade in Brampton look like?
- 2) How will we know what success looks like? Do we have a culture of trade and exporting in Brampton?
- 3) What factors are critical for Brampton exporters to capitalize on shifting global economic growth patterns, and the increasingly globalized economy?
- 4) What role can Brampton Board of Trade play to share related knowledge, expertise?
- 5) What resources are required to move forward?

CIVIC LEADERSHIP

Defining The Challenge

Municipal and regional economic and social growth doesn't happen in a vacuum. Key stakeholders need to be assembled across program and jurisdictional boundaries to develop a common plan, secure resources and oversee implementation of the activities required to move a community forward. Among these key stakeholders are business leaders, leaders of community institutions, city staff and elected representatives.

How can the private sector best address challenges in community leadership? Over the past several years Brampton has fallen short of achieving its full potential, in part, because this collaborative effort has not been as effective as it could be. This is the case, in part, because the various stakeholders weren't able to align themselves, but more often, troublingly, because an individual stakeholder wasn't able to align itself internally. This latter scenario has very much been the case over multiple terms of city council in Brampton, where our elected leaders have had adversarial and unproductive relationships that have embarrassed the community and prevented them from providing the aspirational leadership the community requires. As a result, the major challenges Brampton has faced a decade ago; traffic congestion, adequate commercial zoning, attracting business, a lack of affordable housing, and others continue to persist to this day as city council seemingly votes on critical issues affecting our city's future based on internal allegiances, parochial views and self-interest at the expense of thoughtful dialogue and objective decision-making.

Even if it were the case that city council's issues affected only its ability to be a positive and contributing factor in our community this would be an unfortunate situation. However, dysfunction at the council level affects the ability of the other above-mentioned stakeholders in Brampton to be effective. As city staff are marginalized and their input ignored, as community institutions become underfunded or marginalized, and as the business community reconsiders investment decisions to more business-friendly jurisdictions, Brampton struggles to keep pace with its neighbours in being livable and attracting the talent, businesses and investments needed to be progressive.

As demonstrated by the sheer number of community groups that have emerged since the 2014 election to address the issue of keeping elected representatives accountable to the community's priorities, the view that Brampton needs better civic leadership is not held by the Brampton Board of Trade alone.

What's Currently Being Done

The Brampton Board of Trade has worked to promote collaboration and civic leadership on an ongoing basis. Among its activities:

- Convening small focus groups of employers – large and small, young and mature to discuss actions to enhance the prosperity of our community.
- Developing collaborations with regional partners and like-minded communities to share ideas and benchmark progress.
- Partnering with the City of Brampton's Economic Development Office on business attraction activities, including hosting trade missions.
- Providing feedback and input on city budgeting and key infrastructure projects
- Hosting roundtables with all levels of government to ensure the business community stays informed and has opportunities to share its voice with elected representatives.

Actions Moving Forward

1. Encourage Brampton's business community to participate in determining better elected representation. Share progress reports on the Prosperity Agenda with employees and support 2018 candidates and current elected officials that can be trusted.
2. Advocate to local Council the need to change representation on the City's economic development committee to include private sector representatives as the majority stakeholders.
3. Convene meetings with major media editorial boards to encourage more balanced reporting.
4. Create and offer a business issue candidate orientation through a "Candidate School" for the upcoming 2018 provincial and municipal elections. The focus would be making economic development and business issues, ballot issues.
5. Consider provincial policy resolutions that support the acceleration of efficient regional transit and transportation.
6. Get involved in decision-making as Brampton LRT routing decisions unfold. Given inability of current Council to decide, consider a municipal referendum to accelerate higher-order transit.
7. Find an individual champion or group of individuals that BBOT can support as allies in the development of our regional economy.

Critical Success Factors

- Bringing all levels of government to the same table with community leaders (High)
- Collaboration with other organizations on key issues (Medium)

- Identify the key projects and players – look for connections and opportunities to collaborate (High)

Success Indicators

- Business issues drive elections and become “ballot issues”
- There is inclusive dialogue between business and non-business communities
- Civic leaders and the community come to the Board of Trade as the representation of the business community to consult, collaborate and move things forward
- Securing funding for key projects that will move Brampton forward

Questions for Consideration

- 1) What does effective civic leadership look like for you?
- 2) In what ways can the business community demonstrate its community leadership?
- 3) What are the critical success factors to building civic leadership?
- 4) What’s needed to develop better partnerships among Brampton’s public and private sector?
- 5) How can we develop more civic leaders from our business community?
- 6) What resources are required to move forward?

Continuing the Prosperity Conversation

If you would like to provide additional perspective or feedback on this report, please feel free to contact the Brampton Board of Trade at **905-451-1122 ext. 206** or **admin@bramptonbot.com**.