



MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair and Members of the Growth and Infrastructure Committee

FROM: Graham Lowe, Senior Economic Development Officer

DATE: November 18, 2024

MEMO NO.: CSE-2024-010

SUBJECT: 2024 Investment Attraction Highlights

PURPOSE OF THE MEMORANDUM:

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide Council with highlights of 2024 Investment Attraction activities. A more comprehensive update will be provided via the annual Invest Halton Hills report in Q1 2025 and updates to the Strategic Plan committee(s).

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT:

Town staff provide a suite of quality local economic development programs, work side-by-side with investors to provide tailored assistance, and showcase Halton Hills as a prime investment destination.

Investment Attraction staff implement the [FDI Attraction Strategy \(2020\)](#) and the [Business Concierge Program](#), as well as participate in a number of key cross-departmental initiatives related to economic development. Significant progress has been achieved.

Going forward, as outlined in the staff recommended budget and building on successes achieved to date to deliver on Council's strategic priority of a Thriving Economy, there is a growing need to address service gaps and respond to the downloading of key economic development services by Halton Region, including:

- Responding to significant growth in Business Concierge and Community Improvement Plan (CIP) inquiries, including a record number of CIP requests and associated private-sector investments generating community benefits (e.g.

vibrant downtowns, brownfield redevelopment, heritage preservation), and a 23% increase in investment leads (on top of a 300% increase in 2023).

- Downloading of Halton Region's economic development services, including the resulting significant service gaps and additional workload related to investment lead generation (e.g. identifying perspective new businesses), lead servicing (e.g. managing relationships with potential investors which can be a complex multi-year process), data acquisition, analysis and reporting (e.g. data is essential to strategic decision making), economic sector promotion (e.g. attracting and retaining investments in the Town's target sectors), and the development and implementation of sector strategies.
- Downloading of Halton Region's agricultural community/sector supports related to:
 - Supporting the viability of local agriculture through data collection and analysis, industry events, communications, grants, development and implementation of agricultural strategies (e.g. Agricultural Strategy);
 - Development and implementation of programs (e.g. Simply Local), workshops, agricultural asset mapping;
 - Partnerships with regional and provincial agricultural organizations/associations;
 - Liaison role with farm and food operations across Halton and with industry, government and post-secondary organizations (e.g. OMAFRA, Foodland Ontario, University of Guelph); and
 - Subject-matter expertise and rapid response to agricultural issues.
 - With Halton Region no longer having the Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee, supports are needed to develop and deliver the workplan of the Halton Hills Agricultural Roundtable.
- Undertaking the downloaded Halton Region services is a major undertaking, with no existing resources available to complete this work.
- Initiating an in-house update of the Town's FDI Attraction Strategy and the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, with the goal to reduce the future need for external consulting fees;
- Positioning Halton Hills to be investment ready in response to the expansion of the Premier Gateway employment area, as well as to leverage the current land supply through the identification and processing of major multi-year investment opportunities; and
- Implementing the activities outlined in the October 28, 2024 Council [motion](#) regarding the delivery of a comprehensive economic development tour program for Federal and Provincial Government Representatives, resources permitting.

Effectively and efficiently responding to the latter pressures and opportunities is key to maintaining the Town's economic competitiveness, capturing assessment and tax revenue, promptly servicing investment leads, and having a seamless service transition from Halton Region. Missed investment opportunities have the potential to negatively

impact the Town’s open for business approach, and not capture associated non-residential assessment, local jobs and municipal tax revenue.

COMMENTS:

1. 2024 FDI Attraction Updates:

Staff completed three very successful and targeted trade missions in 2024:

Date	Event	Location	Attendees	Investment Meetings Conducted	High Potential Prospects
March 2024	Light + Building Trade Show	Frankfurt, Germany	2 Town Staff (Town-Led)	23	3
May 2024	IFAT Trade Show	Munich, Germany	1 Town Staff (Town-Led)	29	4
September 2024	IMTS Trade Show	Chicago, USA	1 Town Staff (OMCA-Led)	14	1

The Town’s 2024 trade missions were completed within the projected budget, resulting in a total of 66 high-quality and pre-evaluated in-market meetings.

Staff also advanced several other FDI initiatives throughout 2024 including:

- Site Visits: In June 2024, staff hosted a site visit/familiarization tour from a German food manufacturing company that was identified as a lead in 2023. Staff visited the company’s headquarters in Germany in March 2024. Investment discussions with this company are currently ongoing.

Staff collaborated with Halton Region, the Town of Oakville and the City of Burlington to host a bus tour of the region during the 2024 Collision Conference in Toronto. Representatives from 28 companies and 9 different international markets participated in the tour.

In July 2024, staff hosted representatives from Invest Ontario (IVO) for a site visit and familiarization tour of Halton Hills. Additional familiarization tours may also be explored with senior levels of government in the near future, resources permitting.

- Lead Generation: In-market activity in 2024 generated 66 new FDI leads. In 2024, greater focus was placed on the quality of leads, rather than the quantity of leads. Generating leads in-market, via international tradeshow, is the most

economical way to identify and to subsequently service higher quality leads.

- Inbound Investment Inquiries: In response to the Town's successful FDI program, staff continue to service an increasing amount of reactive/inbound investment leads, which saw a 23% increase from 2023-2024 – this being on top of a 300% increase in 2023. Staff serviced 37 inbound investment leads in 2024.
- Partner Collaboration: Staff continue to actively engage with key stakeholders in Canada's FDI ecosystem. In 2024, this included promoting Halton Hills through Invest in Canada's (IIC) InfoZone initiative, which unifies FDI promotion by centralizing information sharing, investment insights, brand promotion and regional expertise through a central portal. There will be further opportunities to promote Halton Hills' through IIC and InfoZone in 2025. Staff also continue to regularly interface with Trade Commissioners in the Town's target markets.
- Local Development Site Promotion: In 2024, staff submitted five Halton Hills development sites through IVO's Zoom Prospector tool, ensuring that key stakeholders in Canada's FDI ecosystem are aware of the development opportunities Halton Hills. Staff also submitted local photography to IVO, which is now featured on the organization's website.
- Marketing Collateral Development: An updated Community Profile, [Halton Hills: On the Road to Success](#), was completed and distributed in 2024. This document recently won the national Economic Development Association of Canada (EDAC) Marketing Award for 2024. The Community Profile aligns with the [On the Road to Everywhere](#) video series, which was also completed in 2024. The five-video series demonstrates Halton Hills' value proposition as a premier investment destination.

Staff continue to develop an inventory of new, tailored FDI materials required for in-market follow-ups, as well as refine the Town's Investment Business Cases (IBCs), including the development of three new IBCs focused on hydrogen, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and hotel/accommodation developments.

- Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E): FDI activities also provide a platform for identifying potential opportunities for local businesses, thus supporting the Town's BR&E program. FDI leads typically need a range of local partners, whether it be for distribution, after-sales servicing, or to form a joint venture. For example, in 2024, staff worked closely with Trade Commissioner staff at the Canadian Embassy in Portugal on a joint venture project between a Portuguese company and a local Halton Hills company.

- CanExport Community Investments (CECI) Funding: Staff continue to successfully leverage the federal government's CECI funding program to further advance Halton Hills' FDI Attraction Strategy. From 2019 to present, the Town has been successful in receiving \$242,934 in funding from CECI.

2. Business Concierge Program Updates:

Launched in 2021, the Business Concierge Program helps streamline the review of major economic development leads and projects along the full continuum of business attraction and retention. The Business Concierge also provides strategic guidance, advisory services and comments from an economic development perspective on several cross-departmental projects undertaken by other departments. Investments in the Business Concierge pipeline are increasingly complex and represent significant financial investments, and require multi-year tailored support. Existing staff are at full capacity supporting the existing pipeline of investment leads.

Currently, the Business Concierge Program is assisting with active and upcoming projects representing over \$2 billion in potential investment, over 3,000 direct jobs and about 8 million sq. ft. of development potential. Non-residential investments contribute to assessment growth and increased tax revenue, which are key to delivering the Town services that residents and businesses rely on.

2024 Business Concierge highlights include:

- Conestoga Cold Storage (16408 Steeles Ave.): Final Site Plan Approval issued and continued construction of cold storage facility. Additional Site Plans were submitted and are currently under review for Phase 2 and 3 of the facility.
- ProLogis (8111-8119 Trafalgar Rd.): Construction commenced in Q2 2024. A successful Construction Kick-Off Ceremony that was attended by the Mayor and Councillors on July 9, 2024.
- Bentall GreenOak (8250 Eighth Line North): The Zoning By-law Amendment was approved by Council on October 7, 2024. A Site Plan application was submitted on October 22, 2024, for Buildings 1 and 2 on the site, totaling approximately 355,700 sq. ft. of leasable space.
- QuadReal (12689 Steeles Ave.): Town staff are currently compiling the Draft Plan of Subdivision Conditions, and a recommendation report is expected to go to Council for a decision in December 2024.
- Premier Gateway Servicing: Since 2021, Town staff have been working collaboratively with Halton Region staff to expedite the delivery of water and wastewater services to the eastern portion of the Premier Gateway Employment

Area (east of Eighth Line). This is a key initiative as it will facilitate the development of the Phase 2A and 2B Employment Areas. In response to these efforts, the timeline for service delivery has been tentatively reduced by about four years (2027 vs. 2031). In July 2024, a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment commenced for the required wastewater pumping station and staff recently received a notice for a Public Information Centre.

A more fulsome economic investment update, which (among other things) will include projected tax assessment growth, development charge revenue, cash-in-lieu of parkland revenue and application fees revenue, will be presented in the Invest Halton Hills Annual Report in Q1 2025.

CONCLUSION:

Investment Attraction activities directly advance Council's strategic priority of a Thriving Economy - driving assessment growth, quality local jobs, and tax revenue to support the delivery of the Town's services.

Reviewed and approved by,

Damian Szybalski, Commissioner of Community Services

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer