

## *Recommendations from Economic Development Workshop*

Economic Development staff from various municipalities met on May 13<sup>th</sup> to discuss ways by which the Auto Mayors could help sustain and grow the auto industry in Ontario. These recommendations focus on actions within the control of municipalities where power is achieved through collaboration and coordination. The recommendations are pragmatic and balance quick, easy wins and medium term actions to achieve impactful results.

### **1. Coordinated Corporate Calling**

Most municipalities have some form of corporate calling program though economic development departments in order to connect with local companies. Corporate calling provides a forum to learn about company challenges and opportunities as well as inform companies about initiatives that may be of benefit to them. This recommendation would step up the program to involve the Auto Mayors.

- Primary objective is to harness power of current activities to drive common automotive objectives quickly and cheaply
- Focus is on coordination of strategy and messaging
  - Suspend cross jurisdiction competition for automotive calls only
  - Coordination through Auto Mayors' full time coordinator
  - Common template approach
  - Shared and transparent data across all participants in a single database
- Auto Mayors are responsible for majority of action and resources in the their own communities
- Municipalities shift all focus of corporate calling to automotive messaging and objectives for 6 months

## **2. Coordinated Outreach**

This recommendation involves two major outreach initiatives to raise awareness of the coordinated approach, message and objectives of Ontario's Auto Mayors. The first initiative is an Auto Mayors Day at Queen's Park to raise awareness amongst politicians of the real and urgent need for policy changes to create favourable conditions for automotive investment in a globally competitive environment. The second initiative involves coordinated visits from the Auto Mayors to OEM head offices in North America to demonstrate a common front and willingness to earn their investment in Ontario.

- Messaging at Queen's Park to include the importance of the auto sector to Ontario; the need for trade policies to support Ontario auto companies; and the need for government to partner with industry for continued investment in existing plants and government investment to attract new automotive industries to Ontario.
- Auto Mayors Day at Queen's Park is a one-time visit that may become annual. It could evolve into a trip to Parliament Hill as policy objectives are delineated.
- Full day assault of Mayors, EDO's and Industry on Queen's Park
  - News coverage
  - MPP visits
  - Premier's office profile
- Smaller groups of Auto Mayors and EDO's to visit each of the corporate NA head offices of all OEM's

## **3. Virtual Centre of Excellence**

This recommendation recognizes the many stakeholder groups that are involved in advancing the interests of the auto sector including the Auto Mayors, CAPC, Auto21, APRC, Unifor, all levels of government, universities, colleges and R&D centres. The primary objective of this recommendation is to drive Auto Mayors' objectives on a more permanent basis and to leverage the resources of other stakeholder groups.

- Focus is on coordination of common goals for all Ontario automotive jurisdictions
- Data sharing and coordination of automotive growth efforts
- Centre takes a leadership role to leverage resources of industry stakeholders
- Coordination will help determine on which issues the Auto Mayors take a leadership role

## *APRC Recommendations for Ontario Auto Mayors*

- 1. Establish Public Private Partnerships to Stimulate Investment & Support Regional Cluster of Economic Activity:** Public Private Partnerships that bring together sub-national governments, industry and educational institutions can be built to link knowledge generated through corporate R&D and university research with government and private investment. Support for regional SME's can also be provided through such partnerships. By leveraging current research and investment activity and by helping SMEs develop, these partnerships can facilitate the development of knowledge based or technical expertise based clusters. Conestoga College's Centre for Smart Manufacturing and Waterloo's Communitech should be examined as examples of such collaboration. Support for efforts to establish such centers might be available through Ontario's METDE.
- 2. Convene Stakeholders to Ensure Broad Engagement and Coordination Across All Three Levels of Government and Across Appropriate Jurisdictions:** Collaboration should also be promoted among other levels of government, and with other jurisdictions within the Great Lakes Region. Automotive policy supports are fragmented across jurisdictions in Canada and the establishment of a sector roundtable or other mechanism to improve coordination would be constructive. This could be similar to the Pro Mexico initiative. Also, since evidence suggests that automotive production is so integrated across the Great Lakes Region, working with regional governments in Michigan, Ohio and Indiana to increase investment in entire region might be more beneficial than competing with other jurisdictions within the region.

- 3. Build Institutional Capacity to Understand Automotive Sector and Advantages Offered by Ontario Regions:** Knowing in greater detail what specific skills are needed by the automotive sector, what specific skills are available from the local labour force, and what training is offered by regional education institutions would better enable Ontario regions to attract investment based on the skills of the workforce. It would also enable them to ensure proper training is being done. Similarly, developing a more detailed understanding of the supply chain needs of automotive producers and mapping out what suppliers are nearby will also help municipalities be more effective at attracting investment. Finally, it is critical that municipalities also work to establish relationships with key decision makers in the industry. This will not only deepen their understanding of the industry but enhance their ability to shape corporate decisions.
  
- 4. Developing an Improved Understanding of Technological Trends can Position this Region to Exploit Increased Investment in Growing Sub-Sectors of the Automotive Industry:** There are key trends occurring in the evolution of the automobile including electrification, light-weighting, changes to propulsion technologies, and improvements in automobile connectivity and “intelligence”. Increased and more sophisticated institutional knowledge of these trends, and knowledge of what other governments are doing in response of these trends, will help inform better economic development activity. For example, the Government of Quebec recently announced a total of \$516.1 million allocated for electrification of transportation strategies. Quebec is supporting the emergence of innovative companies that are positioned to exploit these automotive technological trends. Some regional governments are using procurement strategies to promote new locally produced technologies when making decisions about city fleet vehicles. Could your city offer its fleets of vehicles for the application of new technologies?

- 5. Develop Agenda for Comprehensive Industrial Strategy for the Automotive Sector and Promote Strategy Widely.** In consultation with the industry, perhaps through an industry roundtable, the mayors should work together to prepare a common agenda for policies and strategies that support the industry and attract investment. Improving infrastructure and transportation to key markets (including bridges across the U.S. border) is important. So are programs that fund research, help commercialise new technologies, and/or incent large capital investments. Programs that support regional developed electrification, light-weighting and intelligent vehicle technologies are important, and so are programs that ensure we have the skilled workforce the automotive sector of the future will need. But voices calling for these industrial strategies are more likely to be heard if there are many of them, and if they are unified in content.



