

Exploring Best Practices in the United Kingdom

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By Maria Ellis, Director, Federal Affairs & Executive Director, PNITA

The Portland Business Alliance and the Pacific Northwest International Trade Association (PNITA) recently participated in the United Kingdom Best Practices trip. Each year, this trip brings together public, private, and nonprofit leaders from the Portland-metro region to meet with leaders and learn about the issues impacting them most.

During the trip, we traveled to London, Manchester, Sheffield, Liverpool, Glasgow and Edinburgh. We learned that that we often share similar challenges, such as homelessness and congestion. We were also able to discuss initiatives that have - and sometimes haven't - worked to address these issues.

1. In no particular order, here are some of the top takeaways from this trip:

Being open to the world, rather than protectionist, is a growth strategy.

Despite the Brexit efforts, economic development professionals and players from the private sector, academia and nonprofit arenas were unanimous in their sense that being open to globalization and immigration is actually a positive force for economic growth and prosperity.

2. Congestion pricing can be done, even in mega cities.

As Portland considers a right-size model for its congestion pricing, it's worth learning from what London has done. London, with a population of 8 million people in a region of roughly 600 square miles, has implemented a substantial congestion pricing structure that charges vehicles £11.50 per day when they enter the downtown area from 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. Additionally, in an effort to improve air quality, London has imposed a fee on certain vehicles within an Ultra-Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ), which mirrors the congestion zone boundaries. This fee of £12.50 is charged 7 days a week, 24-hours a day, year-round on older vehicles that don't meet the ULEZ emissions standards, and is in addition to the congestion fee. While this is a very aggressive model and equity must be considered, the Portland region should evaluate and learn from this model as it seeks to implement its own program.

3. Chambers of commerce are active economic development partners.

While it is important to advocate for the policy needs of business, the chambers we visited were also active partners in economic development. They proactively work with

economic development partners to support companies make global connections, provide support for entrepreneurs, and in landing foreign direct investment expansions.

4. Not having to worry about health care can help entrepreneurs focus on growing their companies.

We met with several high-growth potential start-ups and asked how they managed their health care costs as they were building their businesses. The founders, puzzled, didn't understand the question and said they have never worried about getting to a doctor when needed since they have universal health care. Our group discussed how freeing-up people from having to worry about covering their health care would release them to pursue more industrious endeavors, such as developing the next new disruptive company.

5. Intentional investment fosters high-growth potential start-ups.

The Scottish Edge, and associated Scottish Edge Pledge, are investing in science and technology based start-ups, as well as those focused on the circular-economy and social-enterprises, that have the potential to create jobs as they grow and benefit society or the environment. The Scottish Edge competition provides funding and wrap-around support to help these companies grow, while the Scottish Edge Pledge winners agree to contribute a minimum of 1% from exits or make a donation from future revenue streams to support the next generation of disruptive entrepreneurs.

6. Heavy investment in manufacturing Research & Development (R&D).

The Oregon Manufacturing Innovation Center (OMIC), located in Scappoose, was inspired by the work of the University of Sheffield Advanced Manufacturing Research Center (AMRC) and its partnership with more than 110 manufacturing partners, including Boeing, Rolls-Royce and Airbus. The AMRC conducts world-class R&D related to advanced manufacturing, such as machining, casting, composites, design and prototyping, structural testing, and much more. While we are grateful to have OMIC in our state, throughout the UK, there are multiple manufacturing research facilities working in a variety of manufacturing-related industries. These are examples of how the private sector and public sector are working collaboratively to prioritize research and maintain healthy industries.

7. United and actively responding to climate change.

The territories making up the UK are essentially islands and thus the threats arising from climate change are real and present. All of the cities we visited had proactive and ambitious initiatives to curb emissions, move towards cleaner energy, and becoming overall more sustainable. You could see these initiatives played out in a variety of ways, including incentives for driving less, not using single-use plastics, expanding the use of sustainable energy, and every major institution included reduction of carbon their footprint as a top priority. This is a lens through which most decisions are filtered.

8. A “collective impact” philosophy for getting things done.

Our group was impressed with the collective impact philosophy with which partners collaborate to work towards shared goals. This was particularly noted in the Scotland CAN DO framework, which was created in a collaboration between more than 300 local and international entrepreneurs, the Scottish government, universities and corporate

partners. The plan, established in 2014, is a roadmap for building a competitive and thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem and ensures that partners are using their individual energies to contribute to the larger shared goals. Underpinning this approach is the notion that individually, partners can't necessarily move the dial on their own, but together, can accomplish a lot.

9. Innovation districts are economic engines.

While in Manchester, we visited the Oxford Road Corridor, which is their impressive innovation district. This one square mile employs 79,000 workers, includes 8,800 businesses, and generates more than \$4.6 billion (£3.6 billion) worth of economic activity, which is roughly 20% of Manchester's GDP. In this example, the public sector made significant investments that attracted follow-on private investment and opportunities for entrepreneurs. As we work to fulfill our vision for the Portland Innovation Quadrant, there are lessons we can learn from Manchester about what worked and how to establish this area as an economic driver for our region.

10. Regional cooperation that honors local independence.

Though regional governments were disbanded some time ago, Manchester has found a way to have the best of both worlds - the intentional collaboration needed to make regional investment decisions, while ensuring local boroughs have a voice and autonomy. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority is a group of the 10 regional mayors, who oversee local boroughs, and one super mayor who is voted in by the regional citizens. They work together to address common issues affecting everyone in the region like transportation, community development and attracting investment to the region. Unlike our Metro model where district representatives are voted in and are part of the Council, the Combined Authority leverages existing independent leadership to populate their Council. One area of differentiation is the close partnership and collaboration the Combined Authority has with business in the region.

Stay up-to-date on issues impacting Oregon trade with our new social media accounts on Twitter at [@TradeinOR](#) and on LinkedIn. If you want to get involved or become a member of PNITA, you can reach out to Executive Director, Maria Ellis, at pnita@portlandalliance.com.