

# 2025 SITE CONSULTANT MID-YEAR REPORT

## This year came in swinging

We know 2025 has been a wild ride so far, and we feel it too. From policy shifts and market pressures to widespread economic uncertainty, economic developers have had to stay sharp and adaptable. But amid the turbulence, we're looking for a through line: What's really happening in the business landscape and how is it impacting site selection and economic development?

To find out, we surveyed our network of more than 100 active site consultants over the past two months to get their perspective on project pipelines, emerging trends, and the advice they'd offer economic developers to stay the course. The result is our second annual Site Consultant Mid-Year Report, offering a clear and concise view from those on the front lines.

We know your time is valuable. Our goal is to deliver insight, clarity, and a little steadiness along the way.

Sincerely, *Carla Sones*

## The Tariff Paradox

It's safe to say tariffs emerged as the prominent theme from our site consultant network—unsurprising, given the instability in recent months. Policy has been all over the place lately, leaving companies (and let's be honest, all of us) with more questions than answers about what's coming next. But here's

**“We are seeing an uptick in active FDI projects due to the tariffs.”**



Jamie Newell

the twist: while some companies are pausing to wait for clarity, others are diving headfirst into the U.S. market with minimal preparation. Like Jamie Newell from Wallbridge notes, “We are seeing an uptick in active FDI projects due to the tariffs, and while there are still companies moving forward with adjustments being made to the domestic supply chain and

feedstocks, some European companies are pulling out of North America completely.” Many of these foreign companies say they need to be here only to realize midway that they lack a clear understanding of supply chains, project timelines, or costs. That's when reevaluation begins, and projects often stall. At the same time, some site consultants are investing significant time educating prospects that may never turn into a real project. That's time and effort with no guarantee of payoff. Consultants are also noting this spike in foreign direct investment (FDI), especially from Canadian companies looking to secure locations before policies shift again. You can expect most projects that were already in motion before the current administration to move along. Get ready for a sprint later this year as companies try to beat deadlines on tax credits and before the next wave of changes.

## WHERE WE'VE BEEN

So far in 2025 we've traveled to:

- Greenville, South Carolina (*three times!*)
- Dallas, Texas
- Scottsdale, Arizona
- Las Colinas, Texas
- Houston, Texas
- Washington DC
- McKinney, Texas
- Abilene, Texas
- Roanoke, Virginia
- London, United Kingdom
- New York, New York
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Calgary, Alberta
- Kalamazoo, Michigan
- Chicago, Illinois
- Fort Wayne, Indiana

## WHO'S BEEN THERE

This year marked our first event beyond North America. For 11 years, we've proudly hosted economic developers from across the continent. This year, we expanded our reach, welcoming 46 international clients from 18 countries and 10 global industry leaders + site consultants in London.

## WHERE WE'RE GOING

During the second half of the year you can find us:

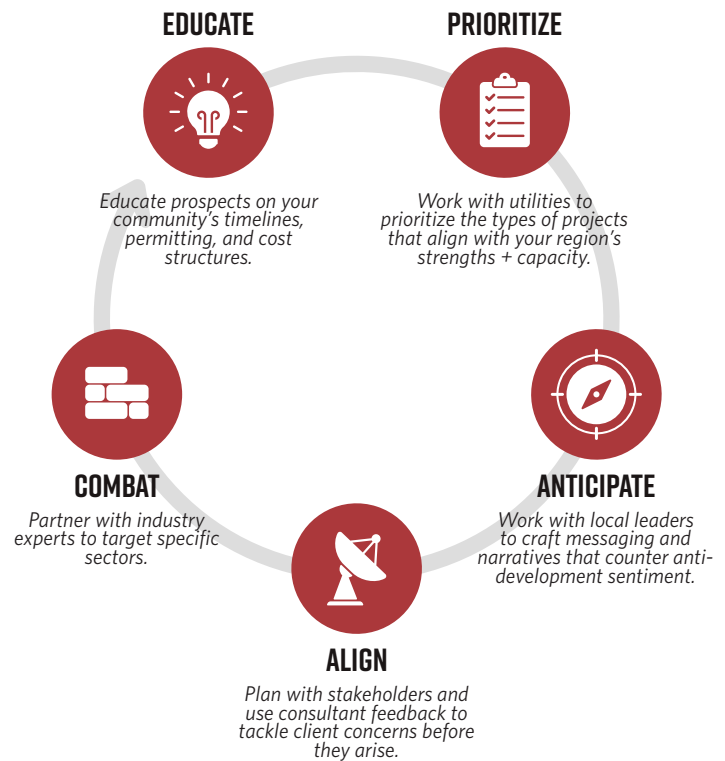
- In NYC and Asheville for our Summit Series
- In Lake Nona, Florida for ECONOMIX (November 11-13)

## Collaborate to Compete

We've spent over a decade working with site consultants and economic developers to help build the kind of relationships that lead to real results. According to our site consultants, those relationships matter more than ever in 2025.

Clients expect fast, clear answers and, when timelines are tight, trust is often the deciding factor. As one site consultant told us, "We're not in the same environment we were a year ago. The bar for responsiveness is higher, and the margin for error is smaller. One missed step or partner, and your community could be out of the running—not because you lack potential, but because things felt disjointed."

So, how do you stay competitive? Prioritize trust. And that doesn't just mean getting to know site consultants (although our events are a great way to do that, wink wink). It means tightening up your local partnerships (utilities, local government, workforce partners, and community organizations). When your whole team shows up prepared and aligned, it signals that a company will be in good hands. At the end of the day, site consultants are trying to eliminate risk for their clients. A community that's slow to respond, disorganized, or not fully transparent? That looks risky. The best thing you can do right now is foster honest, regular communication with your partners. Get aligned. Speak with one voice. And check out the graphic on the right: we pulled together a few ways to build collaboration within your community. Just remember that economic development is never a solo act.



## CONNECT WITH TOP SITE CONSULTANTS

If you are looking to grow your site consultant network, learn what's happening in the industry, or connect with like-minded economic development professionals, join us for ECONOMIX in Lake Nona, Florida this November 11-13!

### Register Here:

<https://consultantconnect.org/economix/#Register>

Questions? Contact Nick Riashi at [nick@consultantconnect.org](mailto:nick@consultantconnect.org) or call 248.766.4342.

## Anywhere but Here

By now, you've probably dealt with NIMBYism ("Not in My Backyard"). Whether the project is industrial, residential, or anything in between, the reaction is often the same: "Great idea, just not near me." That might mean their backyard, neighborhood, park, or another location ten miles away. And since land-use decisions are mostly local, it's no surprise these challenges can delay, or even derail, a project.

But NIMBYism isn't always a bad thing. If your community doesn't want another data center, that's okay. What matters is being clear and upfront about your priorities. Let site consultants know which sectors you're targeting and what types of investment are a good fit. Clear answers help site consultants make informed decisions and build trust.

Open conversations are especially critical as the One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBB) gains traction. Its Foreign Entity of Concern (FEOC) provisions may reignite debates around companies

from specific nations. As Matt Hogan from DuCharme, McMillen & Associates, Inc. puts it, "Work with your legislatures and administrations to maintain a current understanding as to whether your communities will support inbound investment from companies that are from these select home nations. If states and/or localities won't host these companies, then act on a clear policy that models the federal FEOC language so site selectors know which states will and won't entertain an inbound."

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Matt Hogan

The bottom line: address concerns early. Bring in trusted local voices. Don't avoid public discourse. Instead, lean into it and guide the conversation toward the benefits of smart, strategic development from the start.