

August 11, 2020

Mark Charles, Manager of Sustainability  
City of Dayton  
101 West Third St.  
Dayton, OH 45402

Dear Mr. Charles,

As the largest regional business advocate in the greater Dayton region, the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce represents nearly, 2,200 businesses and organizations in southwestern Ohio in a nine county region. On behalf of these members, the Chamber appreciates your willingness to engage the business community in the deliberations surrounding the proposed “Strategy for a Sustainable Dayton”.

As was made clear during the business roundtable that the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce hosted on August 5, 2020, the business community is eager to participate in ongoing community discussions around environmental sustainability. With representatives from businesses like Cargill, Oberer Development Company, Techmetals, Dayton Power & Light, Vectren/Centerpoint Energy, Noble Tool & Libra Industries, the roundtable provided an opportunity for the business community to provide direct feedback to you and your team that will help shape the “Strategy for a Sustainable Dayton” moving forward.

In addition to the business community, we were pleased that the economic development community also participated in the conversation, with representatives from the Dayton Development Coalition, Downtown Dayton Partnership, County Corp, the Dayton Home Builder’s Association and the Dayton Regional Manufacturers Association providing excellent guidance on the impact this plan may have on our economic development strategies in the future.

As promised, I want to take the opportunity to highlight a few of the most important points that we’ve gathered from the business community and economic development community during the roundtable discussion that you participated in, and in subsequent follow-up conversations. We urge you to continue to look towards the dual goals of sustainability and economic development not as mutually exclusive, but rather, as inextricably linked as we work together to ensure growth and prosperity in our community.

There are several key points that were recurring themes during many of discussions of this issue with the business community. We respectfully ask that incorporate these recommendations from the businesses and economic development community into the final recommended “Strategy for a Sustainable Dayton”.

- Flexibility and the opportunity to incentivize compliance rather than penalize non-compliance is a key point that several businesses raised when reviewing the proposed strategies. Whether this takes the form of tax abatement/credit opportunities for green & energy projects, or other incentives, we strongly believe that increased regulations are not the way to a more sustainable community. The business community can, and in most cases wants, to partner on the sustainability solutions for our future.
- The economic development community seeks to continue to position Dayton as an attractive place to move and grow business. We are concerned that points outlined in the plan such as the Sierra Club’s Ready for 100 (% renewable energy) by 2035 do not take into account the complex economic situation in which we find ourselves. Daytonians deserve choice. Potential policy that mandates a single energy source for

homes and businesses takes away that choice and raises prices for all customers. Investments in renewable energy technologies are important, but both cost and timeline towards implementation must be realistic for our community.

- Affordable utilities drive key investments and growth, both now, and in the future. Both electric and natural gas continue to be important components of the energy conversation, even as we look to find the right mix of transitional and renewable energy products. The City of Dayton must stay competitive to potential site selectors, and an understanding of our fossil fuel requirements that include realistic timelines, and also takes into account cost, reliability and adequate availability for the consumer is critical.
- We also believe that adopting a ban on fracking activity inside the Dayton City limits is more political than it is pragmatic. As this practice is not currently taking place inside the city, and will likely not take place due to our geological setting, we support keeping the report focused on real impacts for our community.
- The establishment of a citywide mandatory “plastic bag” fee is not the right method for incentivizing the use of re-usable bags. Particularly as many of our commercial and retail stores have been the hardest hit during the Covid-19 economic downturn, additional regulations that must be enforced with customers is a tough challenge. Partnering with businesses like Kroger that want to voluntarily phase out plastic bag use is a better method for accomplishing this goal in the long term.
- Finally, recycling is an important part of a sustainability strategy, however, “establishing a mandatory recycling rate for commercial entities in the City ( e.g at least 50% of the waste stream)” does not take into account some very significant challenges our businesses, particularly our small businesses , face in this area. Working with both our owner occupied as well as our tenant spaces will be key to ensuring a successful recycling strategy that incentivizes participation rather than punishes non-compliance.

There is a lot of concern for the cost of implementing many aspects of the strategy, and as we all know, the devil is in the details. As each of the city’s department’s work to implement different components of this strategy, we strongly urge increased opportunities for the business community to engage. We believe that sustainability and economic development are not mutually exclusive, and with some consideration regarding the points we’ve outlined above, we believe that a robust strategy is possible.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue and hope that the suggestions and concerns raised by the business community have shed light on the need to find a compromise that allows for sustainable growth and business prosperity. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to seeing the result of our deliberations in the coming months.

Sincerely,



Chris Kershner  
President & CEO  
Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce

cc: Mayor Nan Whaley, Commissioner Chris Shaw, Commissioner Matt Joseph, Commissioner Jeff Mims, Commissioner Darryl Fairchild, Scott Arentsen ( Chair, EAB)