



GREEN & SUSTAINABLE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

A greener downtown is vital to the economic, social and environmental health of the region. Implementation of sustainable projects lowers operating costs for homes and businesses, reduces pollution control costs, and makes the community a more attractive place to live, work and play. A 2006 Gallup poll found that 77 percent of Americans are concerned about the environment and feel they need to “get involved to do their part in making a difference.” Also, the Princeton Review polled high school seniors in 2008 and found two-thirds planned to make their college decisions based in part on the environmental commitments of the institutions to which they applied.

Using sustainability as a crucible for economic expansion and stabilization in Dayton would create secondary benefits, such as decreased spending on emergency hospital visits and fewer missed days from work and school. Businesses want to locate in sustainable cities. In a 2009 Gallup poll, more than half of small business owners reported greening their businesses with any initiative that could be justified through cost savings. The poll also found that 73 percent of businesses are greening for an enhanced public image, 69 percent to attract new customers and 59 percent for cost savings. A greener downtown will provide the most competitive environment for employers evaluating potential regions for relocation, expansion or start-up.

Overall Goal

To increase the number of businesses locating in, as well as the number of people living, working and playing, in Greater Downtown.

Key Recommendations

- **Use the SustainLane city sustainability ranking system as a standard by which to measure Dayton’s “greenness.”** Action steps to improve this ranking include: encourage and enhance the use of alternative transportation and carpools; improve air quality at a high level; implement code/ordinance requirements establishing minimum level of LEED certification for new buildings; support the local Food Policy Council and Miami Valley Grown; implement citywide recycling and composting programs; expand Greater Downtown’s bikeways and use of geothermal energy; establish a carbon level for the City of Dayton and develop reduction goals; increase the purchase of city fleet of CNG and hybrid vehicles; develop green purchasing standards where feasible; and appoint a sustainability manager within the Office of the City Manager.
- **Create a Sustainability Action Plan for Greater Downtown.** Action steps include: Hire a consultant to review “where we are and where should we go” *Sustainability Assessment & Plan* for Dayton. Use the *EPA Green Communities Toolkit* as a guide to initiate green community planning. Promote and support green development. Build upon existing Dayton Regional Green Task Force efforts.

- **Develop and nurture green jobs in Greater Downtown.** Action steps include: Conduct a green jobs benchmarking assessment and an inventory of existing green activities, goals and initiatives at Greater Downtown businesses and organizations; catalog regional activity relative to green economic development efforts; establish a Green Resource Center downtown; provide support for emerging and established businesses to help them grow their presence in green markets; implement incentives and a marketing campaign to attract green businesses to Greater Downtown.
- **Establish a Dayton Regional Green Task Force Green Business Certification Program (GBCP).** Action steps include: Establish a committee of large and small businesses and institutions from the Dayton region; review existing green business certification programs from Indianapolis, Columbus and other cities to determine the best approach for a local certification program.
- **Participate in City of Dayton energy/utility/renewable initiatives.** Those include DPL's Dayton Area Smart Grid Project, the City of Dayton's proposed geothermal well-field (geo-exchange) utility, and clean technology efforts, such as renewable energy.
- **Implement green policy changes.** Those include establishing tax incentives; mandating minimum LEED certification for all new buildings and renovation projects; providing expedited service for reviews of green project plans; revising city codes to readily accommodate green building projects; offering technical support for aspects of green building and marketing support for successful LEED-certified projects; refunding some development costs for green projects; offering density bonuses as incentives; and creating educational programs to encourage green building projects.
- **Develop and promote sustainable transportation initiatives.** Those include auto transportation alternatives and bicycle-friendly plans and amenities, such as a bike-sharing program and Complete Streets policy.
- **Promote re-forestation and recycling in Greater Downtown.** Examples include tree planting on streets, green roofs, and recycling and composting assessments for downtown businesses.