

GREATER MADISON
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
LEGISLATIVE BLUEPRINT

2 0 0 8 – 2 0 0 9



GREATER MADISON
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

LEADERSHIP AT WORK

GMCC LEGISLATIVE BLUEPRINT

2008 – 2009

The mission of the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce is to support enlightened economic growth, positioning the Greater Madison area as a globally competitive place to live, work, play and do business.



A strong economy comes with a healthy business climate, and to create this environment the City should work to promote sound public policy that strengthens businesses. The GMCC is involved in promoting policy issues that support job creation and impeding

The GMCC, representing 1,800 member businesses, believes the City of Madison and the entire Madison Region should encourage entrepreneurship and promote initiatives that attract and retain jobs to preserve and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

policies that stifle economic vitality.

It is our hope that the following guidelines will assist local officials when drafting policies to address relevant issues.

THE GMCC SUPPORTS

Strong Business Outreach

We, as a community, are most effective when all groups partner together to address city and regional issues. As such, elected officials are encouraged to consult with the business community prior to drafting legislation to ensure that new policies accomplish goals without negatively impacting jobs or the economic vitality of the Madison Region. Other steps to reach this goal include:

- Stronger presence of business perspectives on City boards and commissions.
- Improved communication between City officials and area businesses.
 - The GMCC launched Eggs & Issues, a new breakfast series that focuses on city and regional issues. Elected officials are encouraged to attend to meet with their constituents and share opinions on the featured topics.

Eliminating Unnecessary Regulation

Our goal as a city should be to make it as easy and accessible as possible to start a business in Madison. To stay competitive and create, grow and attract good paying jobs, it is critical that the City abandon regulations that are either overly burdensome compared to the expected benefits, better dealt with at other levels of government, or simply unnecessary. When crafting proposals, elected officials should:

- Recognize that many social problems are most effectively addressed at the state or national level. Municipal level efforts to address broad social policies – while noble in their intent – put Madison businesses at an economic disadvantage with businesses in neighboring communities. The economy functions on a regional level and does not respect community borders.
- Use incentives to encourage businesses to help address societal solutions rather than using a “one size fits all” requirement.

Enlightened Economic Development

The City of Madison recently partnered with the surrounding eight-county Madison Region to support Thrive, the Madison Region Economic Development Enterprise. Recognizing that decisions made by Madison officials affect the entire region, the City should:

- Consult with Thrive on ways we can encourage regional economic development.
- Build a collaborative environment by working closely with key business, government, education and nonprofit leaders throughout the entire region.
- Seek opportunities for alignment with Thrive's strategic direction.
- Create, grow and retain businesses and jobs that preserve and enhance quality of life.

Quality Public Education

The success of our school system benefits the future for our children and regional economy. The GMCC recognizes that a solid education infrastructure is also a critical element to attracting and retaining workers. Local school districts in the Madison Region should continue to examine new ways to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our educational system, including:

- Collaborate with active community and education organizations devoted to enhancing our schools.
 - As a partner, the GMCC continues to support United Way Schools of Hope, a group committed to improving the educational success for all students in our schools.
- Encourage innovative, creative and responsible fiscal practices and guidance.
 - Consult with the business community in an advisory role on budgetary, administrative leadership and other educational resource issues.
- Develop opportunities for student internships to adequately prepare students for successful employment.

Available and Affordable Workforce Housing

Affordable workforce housing is critical to not only attracting quality workers, but also retaining existing employees. The City should continue to examine new ways to enhance the accessibility of affordable workforce housing, including:

- Work with employers, developers and housing experts to support an affordable workforce housing strategy in Madison.
- Partner with businesses to identify the housing needs of their employees and develop strategies to address those needs.
- Ensure that the regulatory requirements and process for the approval of new construction, renovation, and infill projects are no more complex or cumbersome than necessary for the protection of the public interest.

Reliable Energy Infrastructure

Reliable electricity is essential for continued economic growth in the Madison Region. The City should support:

- New high-voltage transmission projects
 - The GMCC is not recommending a specific route for the placement of new transmission lines as that decision should be made by the Public Service Commission, but it is critical to ensure that we have the reliable energy capacity levels needed to power high-tech businesses and future economic growth.
- Renewable energy initiatives
 - As a member of the Clean Air Coalition, the GMCC will continue to promote renewable alternatives and initiatives to our members that will decrease our energy output and, when possible, reduce the costs for commercial, industrial and residential energy.



GREATER MADISON
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

LEADERSHIP AT WORK

... continued from inside

Efficient and Accessible Public Transportation

Dane County is the fastest growing county in the state, and it is important to study and implement transportation options to adequately prepare for our future workforce needs. When examining different transportation proposals, the City should choose a plan that:

- Has a comprehensive regional approach which considers all modes and options.

- Maximizes available federal dollars to limit the cost burden on local taxpayers.

In addition, the Metro Small Business Pooling concept is a creative incentive for employers to offer mass transit options to their employees. The City should continue to support this plan and work towards implementation.

Conclusion

Aside from these general examples, there are other quality of life issues that the GMCC hopes to collaborate with elected officials to improve, such as access to affordable child care services and improved water quality in our lakes and wells.

We should continue to build upon the relationship between elected officials and the business community. We all have a stake in the success of this City and the Madison Region and we must continue to improve our communication to accomplish these goals. Together, we can improve the economic vitality and quality of life for all residents.



For more information, please contact:

Delora Newton
Executive Vice President
(608) 443-1947
dnewton@greatermadisonchamber.com

Kevin Little
Public Policy Coordinator
(608) 443-1949
klittle@greatermadisonchamber.com

615 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 71
Madison, WI 53701-0071
Ph: (608) 256-8348
Fax: (608) 256-0333
www.greatermadisonchamber.com