

4-2017

Dayton's BEST 2017 Project: Moving Forward

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Siefker, Zachary; Isemann, Theresa; and Eckrich, Andrew, "Dayton's BEST 2017 Project: Moving Forward" (2017). *Sustainability and Connectivity*. 10.

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Dayton's BEST Moving Forward
April, 2017

We were tasked with developing a project where the focus was on sustainability with abundance that strengthens the lives of Daytonians. When we first pitched the idea for this research project we were interested in promoting business to business sharing and seeding entrepreneurship. Essentially we wanted to create a Craigslist-type platform where businesses could exchange “waste materials” which would simultaneously make businesses more cost efficient, energy efficient, and material efficient. In addition, landfill waste would potentially be diverted. This platform would likely have a web or digital component but we also wanted to focus on the “people component” as well.

Eventually we refined this to a goal of promoting zero-waste among businesses in the Dayton region. Ultimately, we would like to create a network of sharing among local Dayton businesses which synergistically reduces waste and benefits the local economy. Our goals are the following, in the following order:

1. Support local businesses
2. Work toward zero-waste
3. Create new jobs through the creation of these waste sharing connections

After researching and meeting with several local people we defined some paths that can be taken. We see that more than one project can easily materialize out of our work and identified two primary paths. One path is a focus on buying locally and in general championing support of the Dayton community. Another path is a focus on material efficiency, waste sharing, and development of a local circular economy. Ultimately both of these work toward the greater goal of developing a Dayton community of sharing (which really ties together projects from the other groups as well), but to get the ball rolling it will probably work best to approach these separately.

With the buying local project we would like to foster a community of sharing which buys, shares and produces locally. This ultimately leads to more efficient utilization of resources, higher economic output, and a more engaged community atmosphere. In addition to local sourcing, community involvement would also be championed. “Dayton Gems” was an idea which would champion local business based on how “Dayton” they were. It would be a points-based system in which points are awarded for local goods sourcing, community outreach, mentoring, etc. The points can then be recognized by patrons and other businesses as a symbol of community.

A material efficiency path to the project would focus more on waste sharing. Several ideas have come on how to develop this. One avenue would be surveying local businesses and performing a sustainability assessment. Another path is talking to Rumpke and determining what the general

waste flow is for the Dayton region as a whole. Also, a UD sponsored group could work hand-in-hand with several businesses to make material waste connections. We recognize that there is lot of waste associated with any business and it will take some assessment and creativity to develop new methods that eliminate this waste.

The end goal would be a cultural shift in Dayton which promotes sharing among businesses. Each business would see themselves as an important part of the machine we call Dayton rather than as an individual competitor. In this way, businesses would naturally exchange resources, mentor youth, and engage in the community.