



Montgomery County Convention
Facilities Authority

2024-2028 Strategic Plan

September 2023

The right path forward for the MCCFA
and the Dayton Convention Center

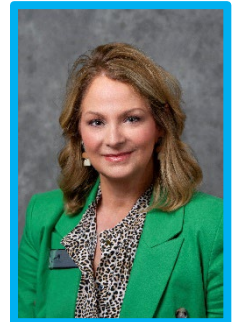




Fellow Community Leaders,

It is with inspiration and commitment that we present the MCCFA five-year Strategic Plan for 2024 – 2028.

What an incredible journey for our organization from 2019 forward with many milestones, from the formation of the MCCFA Board of Directors, the Dayton Convention Center asset ownership transfer, navigating reopening the venue during a global pandemic and mass vaccination operation, to where we are today ... “Innovation Taking Flight.” Our City of Dayton and Montgomery County leaders and Ohio State Legislators have made this possible and entrusted the MCCFA to lead this important work.



As we march forward with the \$40 million transformation of DCC, there is much work to do as a community to create a vibrant downtown Dayton that supports workforce development, attracts talent, drives developer interest, and sustains regional economic growth. You will find laced throughout our plan that partnerships are vital to accomplish this good work. But beyond partnerships and support, the MCCFA is committed to advocate, invest, and cheerlead the initiatives laid out in this plan.

We engaged 14 community leaders and staff to join the Strategic Planning Task Force Committee. During a four-month process, six key strategic initiatives were hatched that will be our focus over the next five years and beyond. The committee embraced and referred to the multi-year visioning exercise of CityWide Development Corporation and you will see familiar references in the plan. These initiatives align with the MCCFA’s mission, vision, and values.

We invite you to review the plan and join us in locking arms to work hard to develop a vibrant “*DaytonVibe* Convention and Entertainment District” that positions the Dayton market as a premiere meetings and event destination!

Thank you for your support,

Pam Plageman

Pam Plageman
Executive Director/CEO, MCCFA

Introduction

The Montgomery County Convention Facilities Authority (MCCFA) is an independent public governing body tasked with overseeing funding improvements and services for the Dayton Convention Center (DCC) facility that will allow the Dayton Convention & Visitors Bureau to attract more national and regional events that will drive revenue and economic growth to Montgomery County and the City of Dayton.

In the first step, the MCCFA started work on the multi-year, multi-phase facility renovation project. The \$40 million project consists of exterior, interior and infrastructure improvements. To guide the next steps, the MCCFA developed a new five-year strategic plan.

On March 30, 2023, the Montgomery County Convention Facilities Authority (CFA) Board of Directors convened a group of Board members, stakeholders, and staff with the goal of developing that strategic plan.

The strategic plan establishes the right path forward for the MCCFA and the Dayton Convention Center to bring more people to Dayton, encouraging them to stay longer, and giving them additional things to do, see and visit that are unique to Dayton.

In just a few months, the group convened, gathered information, reviewed existing conditions, current data and constraints, and reviewed past research and plans as a starting point for the work.

As a result of this information gathering and analysis process, the group developed a strategic framework for both short-term and long-term ideas, strategies and initiatives that will guide the next five years. Each initiative identifies goals and partners and includes key measures of success to track progress.

This plan also takes into consideration the progress and momentum in Dayton, based on the work of all our partners, and seeks to leverage those assets and promote sustainable development in the area surrounding the Convention Center.



The key strategic initiatives are:

1

Drive investment in the *DaytonVibe* Convention and Entertainment District.

The Dayton Convention Center is a component of “*The Nine*,” a nine-block redevelopment strategy led by the City of Dayton. So much work has already started in *The Nine* and throughout the immediate area. The MCCFA plan builds on that foundation and focuses on strategies with the greatest amount of impact around the Convention Center and in the “district” closest to the facility.

2

Invest in the *DaytonVibe* Convention and Entertainment District’s street-level vibrancy.

Dayton is fortunate to have a beautiful Main Street Corridor lined with architecturally rich facades and distinct buildings woven together with a variety of well-designed public spaces. Yet the area immediately surrounding the DCC includes several vacant buildings, with limited visitor amenities and the physical environment--including streets, signage, and lighting--does not provide the right environment where people want to be and feel safe. In conjunction with partners and stakeholders these areas will be the areas with the greatest focus.

3

Connect the *DaytonVibe* Convention District to entertainment districts throughout the city.

The MCCFA proposed plan will create attractive public pathways and spaces around the Convention Center where people feel safe to make connections to the Levitt Pavilion, the Oregon District, the Arcade, and baseball stadium and other venues to increase the visibility of existing assets, improve safety, and create a more inviting, vibrant and visually interesting downtown. A vibrant downtown is an indicator of the economic and community condition of the City and the County, which in turn attracts talent and sustains workforce development.

4

Advance and activate a multi-hotel development strategy.

The DCC is in competition with destinations including Toledo, Northern Kentucky, Fort Wayne, and Sharonville. These areas are continuing to invest in their convention facilities as well as hotels and visitor amenities and so the MCCFA and Dayton must take those steps in order to attract regional and national conventions.

5

Develop and execute a laser-focused parking strategy.

Parking strategies and solutions are essential for the Convention Center’s success and must be included in all initiatives. A coordinated parking strategy and upgraded parking facilities will not only improve the overall Convention Center experience, they will improve real and perceived safety issues.

6

Provide sound fiscal leadership.

Financial management and monitoring play an integral role in the strategic planning and decision-making process, particularly in measuring progress against goals and objectives, and ensuring scarce resources are utilized effectively. Financial stewardship has been the hallmark of the MCCFA and its Board since their inception. This financial expertise will enable the MCCFA to lead and oversee this strategic plan in the most fiscally responsible way.

There are more details to be worked out and more partnerships to be formed, but with successful plan execution, the MCCFA and the DCC will serve as a key driver for the area and will also help attract a beneficial array of mixed-use facilities, residential inventory, restaurants and entertainment offerings for visitors and residents alike.

It will take hard work and community support to move this plan forward, but we are so excited that the process has begun.

Strategic Plan Fundamentals

Vision, Mission, and Value Statements to Guide the Work

Our Vision – The Dayton region will be the leading Midwest destination for conventions, meetings, and events, known for thriving and vibrant convention facilities and accommodations that drive significant economic impact.

Our Mission – The Montgomery County Convention Facilities Authority owns, operates, and manages the Dayton Convention Center Facilities and is responsible for the renovation, revitalization, growth, and expansion of the convention facilities by advocating for the Dayton region and supporting the growth of overnight stays and the region’s economy.



Our Values – Service, Integrity, Collaboration and Respect

Service

We are dedicated to exceeding the expectations of our community, guests, vendors, and partners by demonstrating consistent and professional service with a solution-oriented approach.

Integrity

We are stewards of the public’s trust and are committed to operate in a manner that is transparent and consistent with the policies established by the MCCFA and the laws of the State of Ohio.

Collaboration

We are committed to building strong partnerships and believe collaboration and the sum of our individual contributions lead to great results.

Respect

We recognize and celebrate the diversity of our community by promoting mutual respect; by creating environments in which any individual or group can feel welcomed, respected, represented, supported, and valued; and so all have the opportunity to fully participate.



Strategic Initiatives

1. Drive investment in the *DaytonVibe* Convention and Entertainment District

Background: The Dayton Convention Center is a primary catalyst for transforming one block of “*The Nine*,” a **nine-block redevelopment strategy** led by the City of Dayton and CityWide Development Corporation. The Dayton Convention Center is located directly across the street from the Levitt Pavilion—a free music venue in an outdoor amphitheater, which is the center of *The Nine* redevelopment strategy. *The Nine*-block area hosts over one million square feet of office space and 5,000 parking spaces, with downtown hosting 10,447 residents and 6,378 housing units. To date, with the investment at the Dayton Convention Center, **\$390 million has been invested** in *The Nine* over the last five years!

As a partner with *The Nine* redevelopment team, the MCCFA is activating the transformation of the Dayton Convention Center and the ***DaytonVibe* Convention and Entertainment District**, employing the following key strategies.

Strategies to spearhead Dayton Convention Center transformation:

- Lift the entire *DaytonVibe* Convention and Entertainment District, acting as its advocate, convener, champion, and manager of the experience.
 - Leverage the market momentum generated by *The Nine* successes and be the driving force for development in the Convention District.
- Develop a prospectus to share with the hotel consultant, investors, and developers to communicate the demand and development potential for the Convention District.
 - Harness the power of development partners.
 - Work with the City of Dayton and Montgomery County to develop a land use strategy.

The next section presents a plan of action to reach the MCCFA and community vision for Dayton’s convention and entertainment district. These initiatives align MCCFA and partner capabilities and resources toward a common mission, prioritizing the most impactful initiatives and driving economic growth.



- Communicate the renovations investment being funded within the Convention Center facility via the \$40 million master plan.
 - Facility improvements to date: Safety upgrades, roof repairs, exterior sealing and coating, new telescoping seating system, furniture, lobby carpet, chiller refurbished, roof repaired, elevator cabs improved, catering equipment, and mechanical equipment installed in the kitchen.
 - Open items: Renovations of lobbies, third floor meeting rooms, exhibit hall and flex ballroom intense scope, terrace and plaza installations, restroom facilities, escalator re-modernization, and selected mechanicals.

Champions: MCCFA in partnership with the City of Dayton and Montgomery County.

1-2 Year Milestones: Convention Center Facility Master Plan communicated, promoted, and completed by Q1 2025.

2. Invest in the *DaytonVibe* Convention and Entertainment District's street-level vibrancy.

Background: To kick-start rejuvenation of the *DaytonVibe* Convention and Entertainment District, a cadre of organizations will need to partner with the MCCFA, Montgomery County, the City of Dayton, and the Downtown Dayton Partnership to execute a set of priority action plans. The priorities are aligned to improvements already on the City's and the County's radar to capitalize on existing efforts. Early and visible investments pertain to skywalks, landscaping and plantings, and street banners/window clings/murals with a cultural and art centric, consistent visual design.

Strategies to kick-start rejuvenation of the *DaytonVibe* Convention and Entertainment District:

- Invest financially by securing grant funding, possible tax increment financing, and other sources of funds for the immediate Dayton Convention Center neighborhood and sustain a one to two-year focused effort.
 - Priority aesthetic investments:
 1. Landscape improvements to the Flyover on Main Street | Key partner: the City of Dayton
 2. Skywalk enhancements such as window clings and lighting on the outside or inside as safety enhancements and for beautification | Key partners: the City of Dayton and MCCFA
 3. Use of plantings around the DCC facility that provide brand continuity | Key partner: MCCFA
 4. Beautifying and structural improvements at the Oregon District Parking Garage with a multimillion-dollar investment | Key partner: the City of Dayton
 5. Improving the walkable experience to the Oregon District, including signage consistency | Key partner: the City of Dayton and MCCFA
- Conduct a community update launch and town hall meetings with the Convention District property owners to notify them of investments being made and to rally support for building repair and renovation.
 - Pursue a partnership with the Land Bank to help return Convention District properties to productive use.

Champions: MCCFA, the Downtown Dayton Partnership, and the City of Dayton.

1-2 Year Milestones: Enhanced Convention District skywalks, landscaping, signage, and plantings; parking garage improvements; street and building installations.



3. Connect the *DaytonVibe* Convention District to entertainment districts throughout the city.

Background: Downtown’s abundant arts, entertainment, cultural and historic districts make those districts a desirable place for convention visitors. According to Conventions, Sports & Leisure International (CSL), having walkable districts – vibrant, safe, and navigable districts around a convention facility -- are nearly as important as event space square footage.

Strategies to enhance connections to Entertainment Districts:

- Develop an urban design strategy to create walkable corridors to existing and emerging arts, entertainment, cultural and historic destinations.
 - Prioritize the corridor to the Oregon District by beautifying the pathway and ensuring it is safe, clean, and well-lit.
 - Develop connections to other districts like the ballpark, the art district, the Arcade Building, and the education district including the University of Dayton.
 - Assure an ideal wayfinding system.
 - Explore free or low-cost transportation from the Convention District to key downtown arts, entertainment, cultural and historic destinations to connect locals and visitors to entertainment districts.

Champions: MCCFA, the Oregon District Business Association, the City of Dayton, the Downtown Dayton Partnership, Montgomery County, and the Regional Transit Authority (RTA).

1-2 Year Milestones: Improved safety and beautification of the pathway from the Convention District to the Oregon District.

4. Advance and activate a multi-hotel development strategy.

Background: The recently closed Radisson Hotel is adjacent and connected by skywalk to the DCC. Prior to 2023, it had 287 rooms. It is currently undergoing mechanical refurbishments — and, pending owner financing – rooms and public space refurbishment as the first phase of new investments. An additional 346 hotel rooms are being added in the downtown Dayton area with the pending opening of the Hotel Ardent (118 rooms), the future Hilton Garden Inn (94 rooms) and the recently opened AC Hotel (134 rooms), enhancing the DCC’s convention package. Analyses show that 500+ committable (block of rooms the hotel is willing to set aside for group business) and proximate hotel rooms are needed to host events with significant hotel needs.



Strategies to achieve 500+ committable hotel rooms:

- Support the feasibility study results from the 2015 & 2022 needs assessments, targeting 500+ committable hotel rooms within a three-block walking radius of the DCC.
 - Revitalize the attached *headquarter* hotel.
 - Strategize with Lockwood Developers, the hotel owner, to execute multi-phased investments into the existing hotel.
 - Position the *DaytonVibe* Convention and Entertainment District for new hotel development.
 - Continue to strategize with the current hotel consultant for best market options.
 - Partner with the City of Dayton and CityWide Development Corporation to explore a ground lease structure and RFP process for a new hotel in the next 1-4 years.
 - Conduct site feasibility studies to ensure optimal site selection.
 - Select a brand partner with extensive expertise in hotel development.
 - Conduct a third-party study and market analysis, including a precise business plan with solid projections, to secure financing.

Champions: MCCFA, the City of Dayton, Montgomery County, CityWide Development Corporation, Hotel Consultant(s), Dayton Convention & Visitors Bureau, Dayton Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown Dayton Partnership.

1-2 Year Milestone: Adjacent hotel’s property improvement plan is executed.

1-4 Year Milestones: More hotel rooms online; determine efficacy of a ground lease hotel structure and, if warranted, release an RFP.

5. Develop and execute a laser-focused parking strategy.

Background: The 1,500-space Oregon District Parking Garage is connected to the DCC via enclosed skywalks. According to research conducted by Conventions, Sports & Leisure International (CSL), parking was cited by respondents as a challenge at the DCC. The parking garage was cited by many to be dated. Further, some planners noted that parking availability is an issue, and that there are a limited number of handicapped parking spaces. Twenty-five percent of lost and current/past respondents cited an issue with parking accommodations at the DCC.

Strategies to optimize Convention parking:

- Control a sufficient number of parking spaces, taking into account the success of this overall strategic plan and the increasing demand for parking that will result.
 - Hire a consultant to create a master plan for a phased-in parking solution.
 - Initially, address access to other proximate street and surface lots, circulation improvements, lighting, security cameras, blue light phones, and signage to direct patrons to the various event venues that the parking serves.
 - Brighten parking garage landings, which could include painting ceilings white, to reflect light and provide even more safety and security.
 - Engage with Montgomery County to further promote spaces at the Reibold Garage. Current data shows 200+ spaces available during business hours and 800+ spaces in the evenings and weekends. Montgomery County will direct-bill events for parking.
 - Longer range planning for parking must respect a thriving resident community and offer amenities that appeal to locals and visitors alike, envisioning ground floor space to accommodate shops, restaurants and other programmed needs that sustain a thriving community.



Champions: MCCFA, City of Dayton, Montgomery County.

1-2 Year Milestones: Consultant hired; lighting, signage, and enhanced safety equipment installed.

6. Provide sound fiscal leadership.

Background: The Montgomery County Convention Facilities Authority (MCCFA) and its Board of Directors are committed to the efficient use and sustainable management of resources that align with strategic community priorities. The MCCFA has a demonstrated record of financial stewardship and has consistently managed a steady flow of revenues by investing them into supporting operations and capital improvements. This financial management skillset enables the MCCFA to lead and oversee this strategic plan in the most fiscally responsible way.

Strategies to fund this overall plan:

- Develop an investment strategy to fund this strategic plan.
 - Follow the MCCFA’s guiding principles for any investment of the Board’s funding.
 - Work with partners to obtain grants, gifts, and other funding awards for projects outside of the MCCFA’s authority.
 - Conduct financial analyses that include projected return on investment (ROI) and assessments of community and/or economic impact to ensure the right investments are made.
 - Create a New Community Authority (NCA) that would fund specific improvements as agreed to by the partners.
 - Ultimately ensure that monetary investments into this strategic plan generate increased numbers of visitors, which is the ultimate target measure of the MCCFA and the *DaytonVibe* Convention and Entertainment District.



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Montgomery County Convention Facilities Authority

Dayton Convention Center

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