

Business Connection



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Businesses are part of the fabric of our community

For the last 14 years, my work has focused on growing the economic development impact of our local businesses. That is the essence of a Chamber of Commerce – to encourage and support commerce activities in our community. Therefore, it's no surprise that I have some opinions about what constitutes a business-friendly city. We hear this term used all the time by public officials, who say these words in the hope those listening will believe them. But is it true?

First, let's start with the term itself. When I think about a business-friendly city, I imagine a place that fosters a favorable environment



James Cooper
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for businesses to operate, grow, and thrive. This town prioritizes policies, regulations, and infrastructure that supports economic development, job creation and investment. There is a positive entrepreneurial ecosystem that is characterized by attributes such as low taxes, regulatory efficiency, a skilled workforce, economic diversity, financial incentives, networking opportunities, a good quality of life, and a safe and secure environment.

A business-friendly city is intentional in its efforts to retain and grow businesses. It uses the tools at its disposal – policies, incentives, outreach – to attract interest knowing these organizations will

contribute to economic growth and community prosperity that enhances our quality of life. This city has a healthy and positive relationship with its business community, which encourages organizations from other locations to consider moving their business here.

It also has a healthy environment for the entrepreneurs who change the world for good, the risk-takers who are willing to fail many times while working toward success. These businesses battle for the future, confront resistance to change, and overcome negativity and doubt to bring their ideas to the world around them. But they need to start somewhere, and they need time to develop. They need a business-friendly city that encourages success, that finds a way to say yes instead of always responding with no.

Why is this important? Because businesses provide jobs, generate tax revenue, and help grow a city's quality of life. They are part of the fabric of our community. They volunteer at schools, donate to non-profits, and advertise at youth sporting events. They are your neighbors, your friends, and even your family. The entire community should want a healthy, successful business community, just as they want a healthy, happy city excited about the array of shopping choices that are right here at home.

A business-friendly city is important, not only for businesses but for the entire community. The Chamber encourages you to support your local businesses – shop local, work local, and think local – and to support policies and practices that help businesses thrive.