

Dear Mayor Dailey and City Commissioners,

Thank you for your leadership and congratulations on hosting your 2019 City Commission Retreat. The Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce is excited to work with you to continue to enhance the trajectory of our incredible community. Our organization believes that in order to maximize the best possible future for Tallahassee there should be a regular examination of our community priorities and assets. We are encouraged to know that you all feel the same. In the year ahead, Tallahassee will once again be faced with opportunities and challenges that we must all face, but it is important to know that this is a unique time to look into the future of our city. The Tallahassee Chamber would like to partner whenever appropriate for the benefit of our entire community.

Your Commission now has four new members and is comprised of a diverse and skilled collection of leaders. Meanwhile, our city is now only five years away from celebrating its 200th birthday in 2024. There are many projects set to break ground in 2019 and the prospects for our continued growth are numerous. As you prepare to spend a day contemplating how to best orient and prioritize the resources of our community, we would encourage you to keep those facts in mind. In particular, we would ask that you spend some time considering how one of our most important regional assets can become positioned as a competitive advantage.

The Tallahassee International Airport is more than a gateway for travel. The airport is the key to our increased economic vitality and should be viewed as a regional economic asset. Now is the time to engage with economic development experts to determine the best governance structure for the airport if we are truly planning for the next 5, 10 and 20 years. The structure of the airport as part of the city government presents a number of challenges.

Interim Director David Pollard and his professional staff have worked hard and should be recognized for their efforts towards the recent designation by the Florida Department of Transportation as the Commercial Services Airport of the Year. Positive momentum is in place with the new Airport Master Plan identifying approximately 500 acres of developable land, the widening of Capital Circle SW and other related BluePrint 2000 infrastructure projects and the International Facilities - Foreign Trade Zone designation to support regional manufacturing and distribution. Existing companies within the region have identified the importance of the foreign trade zone for their growth within international markets.

Last year, the Chamber Board of Directors passed a unanimous position statement in support of exploring an Independent Airport Authority. We provided this position to the previous City Commission. Chamber leadership has requested that I share the position with you as a means of encouraging your new commission to take an important step towards improving our airport and its critical services by engaging in a study. As a seventeen year member of the Airport Advisory Committee, I am confident that a study of potential changes to the governance structure of the airport are well warranted.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Mark O'Bryant
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Beth Corum
Chair-Elect

Heidi Otway
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President/CEO

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T H E C H A M B E R

GREATER TALLAHASSEE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Attached you will find a copy of the Chamber's official position on this matter. Also, please find a copy of the Chamber's Six Guiding Principles from which all position statements are developed.

Thank you for your service to our All-America City.

Sincerely,



Sue Dick

Cc: Mayor John Dailey
Commissioner Elaine Bryant
Commissioner Jeremy Matlow
Commissioner Curtis Richardson
Commissioner Dianne Williams-Cox
Reese Goad, City Manager
Wayne Tedder, Assistant City Manager
David Pollard, Interim Airport Director
Chamber Board of Directors
Airport Advisory Committee

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Position Statement: Tallahassee International Airport Authority

Date: Nov 2, 2017

The Board of Directors for the Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce believes in order to strengthen our business environment it is essential to have competitive airport service for our community. During this time of leadership transition at the position of Airport Director, now is the best time to improve the airport governance, plans, and initiatives to better align them with our community's desire for increased economic vitality.

The Chamber Board believes that an independent airport authority could provide a better platform to make the Tallahassee International Airport a higher performing asset for the region. The Chamber respectfully requests that the City of Tallahassee take the necessary steps to review its governance model for the airport and provide strong consideration for a separate and independent airport authority as a preferred option. To the extent the City believes a study is necessary, the Chamber requests that this be conducted on an expedited basis so that any actions that would be required to accomplish an improved model of governance can happen as soon as possible. We look forward to working with the City to advance the airport and further improve our business environment.