



# Strategic Plan: 2013-2018



The Planning Process.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
Vision, Mission, Values and Long-term Goals.....	4
Vision.....	4
Mission.....	4
Values.....	4
Long-Term Goals.....	4
Goa Details, Objectives, Strategies, and Measures.....	4
Goal 1 - Increase our membership base and the diversity of membership.....	5
<i>Objectives</i> .....	5
Goal 2 - Improve the branding, marketing, and communications of the Chamber.....	6
<i>Objectives</i> .....	6
Goal 3 - Increase the Chamber’s regional presence.....	7
<i>Objectives</i> .....	7
Goal 4 - Create new and different ways for members to connect and learn.....	8
<i>Objectives</i> .....	8
Goal 5 - Strengthen leadership acumen within the business community.....	9
<i>Objectives</i> .....	9
Goal 6 - Define workforce development objectives for the Chamber.....	10
<i>Objectives</i> .....	10
Implementing the Plan.....	11



## Introduction

The Chesterfield County Chamber of Commerce was officially incorporated on September 1, 1999. In February 2000, the Government Relations Committee was formed to work on issues such as the county purchasing system, health department guidelines for restaurants, sign ordinance issues, and the Business Professional Occupation License. The first Chamber Night Out was held in November 2000 and the first Celebration of the Vine wine festival was held in July 2007, with 2,000 attendees. In June 2005, the Chamber hired Lenita Gilreath as the new president, succeeding Roger Habeck. Currently, the Chamber is staffed with four full-time employees and one contract employee who serves as the government relations liaison. The Chamber serves and represents almost 800 businesses and branches throughout the metro region, with the majority of those located in Chesterfield County.

In May, 2012 the Chesterfield County Chamber of Commerce launched a project to develop a five-year strategic plan designed to chart a course for the Chamber's future in service to its members. The final version of this plan, presented in this document, was approved by the Board on 04/11/2013.

## The Planning Process

The process for creating a strategic plan began with the development of a new vision for the Chamber and an update to its mission statement and values. To gather input for the development of long-term, strategic goals, members were invited to take a survey about the Chamber's strengths and opportunities for improvement. In addition, a planning committee conducted a SWOT analysis to identify the Chamber's internal strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats external to the Chamber that could affect its future.

The goals that were developed as a result of reviewing member and committee input are presented in this five-year plan. Supporting the goals are objectives and strategies as well as measures to track progress. To ensure effective implementation of the strategic plan, the planning committee developed a process for conducting periodic progress reviews, a scorecard, and guidance documents and templates for Chamber committees. The plan will be updated periodically to address new challenges and opportunities that emerge in the next five years.



## Acknowledgements

The Chamber Board would like to thank everyone who helped to create this plan.

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## Vision, Mission, Values and Long-term Goals

### Vision

To be the champion for the business community, fostering growth and development, transformational relationships, and a thriving environment in Chesterfield County.

### Mission

Our mission is to:

- Promote our members.
- Protect member interests by advocating for sound government policy on issues that impact our county's business community.
- Facilitate collaboration, communication, and a sense of community among our members.
- Provide the most effective programs, events, and educational opportunities to support business excellence, networking, and growth.
- Foster the development of a highly-skilled and competent workforce.

### Values

- Integrity
- Respect
- Inclusion
- Openness

### Long-Term Goals

1. Increase our membership base and the diversity of membership.
2. Improve the branding, marketing, and communications of the Chamber.
3. Increase the Chamber's regional presence.
4. Create new and different ways for members to connect and learn.
5. Strengthen leadership acumen within the business community.
6. Define workforce development objectives for the Chamber.

## Goal Details, Objectives, Strategies, and Measures

The long-term goals are designed to ensure that we can continually improve the way we fulfill our mission and make steady progress toward achievement of our vision. The goals are supported by shorter-term, more specific objectives and well as strategies that support their



achievement and measures for tracking progress. Once baseline measurement data have been collected, numeric targets with deadlines will be developed for many of the measures.

### **Goal 1 - Increase our membership base and the diversity of membership.**

Input from the member survey and SWOT analysis showed that members are seeking greater diversity in the types of organizations and people with whom they network. As member diversity increases, opportunities to make more and better business connections also increase and our membership becomes more reflective of the business community. A broader membership base also provides the financial foundation necessary to support programs and services for our members.

**Responsibility: Membership Committee**

#### **Objectives**

#### **1.1 - Expand membership to include a wider range of generations, entrepreneurs, ethnicities, industries, and business sizes.**

##### Strategies

- 1.1a. Collect and analyze baseline data for member segments.
- 1.1b. Establish member segment targets.
- 1.1c. Develop and implement a targeted member recruitment process.
- 1.1d. Update the member application to gather additional demographic information about member companies and representatives.

##### Measures

- 1.1a. # of members
- 1.1b. % of businesses in the county that are members of the Chamber by standard industrial classification (SIC) code
- 1.1c. % of member representatives from specified age groups
- 1.1d. % of member organizations that are DBE/MBE<sup>1</sup>, DBE/WBE or SWaM<sup>2</sup> certified.
- 1.1e. % of member organizations with specified numbers of employees
- 1.1f. % of member organizations categorized as entrepreneurial

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<sup>1</sup> Federal designations for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises and their Minority- and Women-Business Enterprise Certifications (DBE/MBE and DBE/WBE respectively).

<sup>2</sup> Virginia certification for Small, Woman-Owned and Minority-Owned Business.

- 1.1g. % of members who agree that ethnic diversity is reflective of the broader community

### **1.2 – Raise the retention rate.**

#### Strategy

- 1.2a. Quantify reasons for members leaving in comparison to why they joined.

#### Measure

- 1.2a. Member retention rate

## **Goal 2 - Improve the branding, marketing, and communications of the Chamber.**

The Chamber needs to be visible to its members, potential members, and important business stakeholders in the region. In addition, the Chamber needs to establish a leadership position within the business community. Thus, the Chamber's branding and marketing efforts must be able to reach the right audience, in the right way, at the right time. Effective communication is also essential for obtaining feedback from our members and providing relevant and timely information to them.

**Responsibility: Communications Committee [Proposed]**

### **Objectives**

#### **2.1 – Increase the relevance and effectiveness of Chamber communications.**

#### Strategies

- 2.1a. Communicate with members using their preferred method (postal mail, email, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, broadcast phone calls, etc.).
- 2.1b. Promote and expand the use of social media and other information technology.

#### Measures

- 2.1a. % of members who are satisfied or very satisfied with news and other information provided by the Chamber
- 2.1b. % of members who are satisfied with the use of their preferred method of communication.



## ***2.2 – Embrace and enhance the use of technology for communication.***

### Strategies

- 2.2a. Improve the website. Make it easier to use, navigate, and find pertinent information quickly (e.g., reduced clutter, fewer clicks to desired information, simplified event registration process).
- 2.2b. Allow for multiple event registrations via the website.

### Measures

- 2.2a. % of members who are satisfied or very satisfied with website navigation and ease of use

## ***2.3 – Increase awareness and visibility of the Chamber through targeted marketing, partnerships, and communication.***

### Strategies

- 2.3a. Champion Chamber successes.
- 2.3b. Evaluate and improve branding for Chamber programs and events.
- 2.3c. Evaluate and improve marketing materials and processes.

### Measures

- 2.3a. # of media mentions annually
- 2.3b. # of Chamber success stories published annually
- 2.3c. % of social media followers (delineated by members vs. non-members)

## **Goal 3 - Increase the Chamber's regional presence.**

There are many issues outside of Chesterfield County that have an impact on the business community in the County. Our members want the Chamber to have a stronger voice in these issues to ensure their interests are represented.

***Responsibility: Regional Affairs Committee [Proposed]***

### **Objectives**

## ***3.1 - Create greater awareness of regional developments that have an impact on the business community.***

### Strategies

- 3.1a. Develop a process to rapidly identify regional developments/issues and assess their significance to the business community.



## Measures

- 3.1a. # of regional developments and issues assessed

**3.2 - Engage the Chesterfield business community in regional issues important to them.**

## Strategies

- 3.2a. Establish priorities among the developments and issues.
- 3.2b. Provide timely information to the business community to educate them about the issues.

## Measures

- 3.2a. # of communications to the business community about regional developments and issues
- 3.2b. % of members who are satisfied or very satisfied with the Chamber's involvement in regional developments and issues

**3.3 - Be an essential participant in regional decisions.**

## Strategies

- 3.3a. Continually update the Chamber's legislative positions.

## Measures

- 3.3a. # of meetings and/or conversations with regional stakeholder groups
- 3.3b. % of members who are aware of the Chamber's presence

**Goal 4 - Create new and different ways for members to connect and learn.**

Through the survey, our members told us that the main reason they joined the Chamber was to network with others and market their businesses. It is important to keep networking activities fresh and seek new ways to bring business people together. It is also beneficial for business people to have access to a variety of programs to learn business fundamentals and new or advanced techniques for succeeding in business.

**Responsibility: Membership Committee (Objective 4.1) and Professional Development committee (Objective 4.2)**

## Objectives

**4.1 – Innovate and expand networking activities to help members make the right connections.**

## Strategies

- 4.1a. Facilitate the formation of member-created small groups for networking.



## Measures

- 4.1a. % of members who are satisfied with the following:
  - New networking activities
  - Ability to gain access to the right business people
- 4.1b. # of members who participate in networking events
- 4.1c. # of members who participate in networking programs (paid and free)

**4.2 – Make learning programs more accessible.**

## Strategies

- 4.2a. Evaluate, improve and/or expand training for members.
  - Leverage online webinars.
  - Offer self-paced learning.

## Measures

- 4.2a. % of members who are satisfied with the following:
  - Specific training programs
  - Relevance of topics presented at luncheons, etc.
- 4.2b. # of members who participate in learning events
- 4.2c. # of members who participate in learning programs (paid and free)

**Goal 5 - Strengthen leadership acumen within the business community.**

The planning committee's SWOT analysis indicated a need to strengthen the process by which future Chamber Board members and committee chairs are identified and prepared for their work. Strong leadership, both within the Chamber and among our members, breeds success in the business community.

**Responsibility:** *Professional Development Committee (Objective 5.1), Leadership Development Committee [New] (Objective 5.2), Personnel Committee (Objective 5.2c)*

## Objectives

**5.1 – Enhance the knowledge and skills of local business leaders to facilitate success and growth.**

## Strategies

- 5.1a. Determine the feasibility of developing a business leader program and/or a certified business owner program.

## Measures

- 5.1a. # of members participating in leadership programs



**5.2 – Formalize and institutionalize volunteer leadership development (Board, committee chairs, etc.) to make the organization stronger.**

Strategies

- 5.2a. Review the roles of the Chamber staff, Board, and volunteers and align, as necessary, to the strategic plan.
- 5.2b. Recruit additional volunteers to reduce dependency on staff and current volunteers and to broaden opportunities for leadership roles.
- 5.2c. Assess the compensation of the Chamber staff as it pertains to achievement of the goals.

Measures

- 5.2a. % increase in members participating in committees or other volunteer roles

**Goal 6 - Define workforce development objectives for the Chamber.**

Having a strong workforce is important for attracting new businesses to the County and for providing a pipeline of ready-to-work employees for existing businesses. Through this goal, we expect to bring clarity to our role in workforce development. When the role and objectives are defined, the goal will be revised and new strategies and measures will be developed.

**Responsibility: CHAMPS and Government Relations Subcommittee on Workforce Development**

Objectives

**6.1 – Develop relationships with key workforce development stakeholders that serve the County.**

**6.2 – Increase awareness of current workforce strengths and weaknesses with the County.**

Strategies for 6.1 and 6.2

- 6.1a. Meet with stakeholders involved in workforce development to learn more about their roles and expectations.
- 6.1b. Determine how to better leverage relationships with the stakeholders.
- 6.1c. Develop new objectives based on what was learned.

Measures

Measures will be identified after the development of new objectives.



## Implementing the Plan

The Chamber's Board of Directors has overall responsibility for the implementation of the strategic plan. However, most of the specific strategies and actions will be carried out through committees with staff involvement and support.

The committees will develop annual action plans and be responsible for measuring and reporting progress on a monthly basis. To assist committees in establishing action steps that align with the Chamber's mission, values, and goals, a decision-making tool known as a strategic filter will be provided.

The Chamber Board will review progress reports monthly and conduct a thorough review of the plan annually to assess the continued relevance of goals and objectives and to make appropriate and necessary revisions. To ensure proper oversight, reporting, and analysis, a strategic plan committee will be established.





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