



2021 STRATEGIC PLAN

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A Strong Foundation

The GBA is building upon the work of the Gaston Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Gaston Development Corporation to deliver a stronger, more unified voice of business to create, influence, and leverage economic opportunities throughout Gaston County.

Our work is grounded in our core values:

- Integrity
- Collaboration
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Inclusion

Our purpose

We exist to foster a prosperous and inclusive Gaston County economy for business, residents, and visitors.

Our vision

We aspire to be an essential driver of Gaston County's transformation into a regional business and economic leader.

Our mission

We collaboratively promote business success and economic growth through leadership, marketing, programs & services, talent attraction & development, and advocacy.

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Strategic Priorities

In collaboration with our Board of Directors, members, and partners we identified five key areas of focus for our work.

1 Drive Economic Diversification

Enrich Gaston County's economy, overall reputation, and regional position

2 Influence the Business Environment

Unify the collective voice of business in support of forward-looking policies and infrastructure investments

3 Promote Business Success

Identify the changing needs of business and respond with innovative, effective, and impactful strategies

4 Enhance Workforce Capacity

Prepare and retain talent to encourage and sustain long-term economic vitality

5 Foster Operational Excellence

Enhance employee effectiveness, drive member value, and sustain financial strength

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Drive Economic Diversification

Enrich Gaston County's economy, overall reputation, and regional position

| Objective | Action |
|-----------|--------|
|-----------|--------|

Attract Talent to Gaston County

- Determine the location drivers for tech, entrepreneur, and remote workers**
 - Next level actions TBD
- Market Gaston County as an ideal place for talent relocation**
 - Next level actions TBD

Recruit businesses that enhance job generation and capital investment

- Identify logical business sectors for targeted marketing and outreach**
 - Next level actions TBD

Influence the Business Environment

Unify the collective voice of business in support of forward-looking policies and infrastructure investments

| Objective | Action |
|---|---|
| <p>Strengthen local, state, and federal government relations activity</p> | <p>Develop a legislative agenda process and agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish GBA Advocacy Committee and grassroots network• Identify/support business community policy priorities & govt. affairs issues• Align as appropriate with County, Educational Institutions, Municipalities, and area Chambers <p>Communicate priorities with elected officials and business community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect with Federal & State delegations, County Commissioners, Mayors & public officials• Share NC/U.S. Chamber policy information• Include government affairs topics and elected officials in GBA programming |
| <p>Enhance advocacy of public - private economic growth efforts</p> | <p>Promote pro-growth policies and actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highlight growth challenges and solutions• Identify/address land use planning and implementation challenges• Determine utility (water, sewer, broadband) infrastructure requirements• Promote effective development incentives <p>Advance local, state, and federal transportation infrastructure investments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Form & coordinate Transportation/Mobility Work Group• Facilitate development of a funding strategy |

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Promote Business Success

Identify the changing needs of business and respond with innovative, effective, and inclusive strategies

| Objective | Action |
|---|--|
| <p>Identify and Address the Needs of Businesses</p> | <p>Conduct economic environment study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine data needed• Compile all existing relevant data• Identify role for GBA <p>Ascertain the needs of and challenges for Gaston businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Form collaborative work group• Determine and implement best methods to gather information <p>Assess value of existing programs and services and augment as needed to enhance member benefit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete SWOT analysis on existing programs/events• Modify programs/events based on need, gaps, and duplication |
| <p>Engage and Support Under-represented Businesses</p> | <p>Identify and establish relationships with underrepresented businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine existing underrepresented business sectors• Connect with leadership, organizations, and focus groups involved in sectors to understand needs <p>Determine economic mobility & sustainability opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research best practices of regional and national peer organizations• Connect with underrepresented business owners to determine and implement most effective means of support |

Enhance Workforce Capacity

Prepare and retain talent to encourage and sustain long-term economic vitality

| Objective | Action |
|---|--|
| <p>Develop and Retain Gaston County Talent</p> | <p>Conduct regularly occurring business needs assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perform in-depth due diligence among workforce partners to establish baseline of current activity and metrics• Leverage business-led Talent Pipeline Management process to gather robust workforce needs data, specifically within manufacturing, healthcare and construction industries• Craft employer-generated solutions to address talent supply issues <p>Facilitate further alignment between identified business needs and education/training programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate workforce needs assessment data to identified education/training program providers• Utilize employer-generated solutions to further improve talent development and retention initiatives <p>Promote and market talent development strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify key priority messages of talent development ecosystem• Integrate compelling narrative of Gaston County's education/training opportunities into overall marketing strategy |

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Foster Operational Excellence

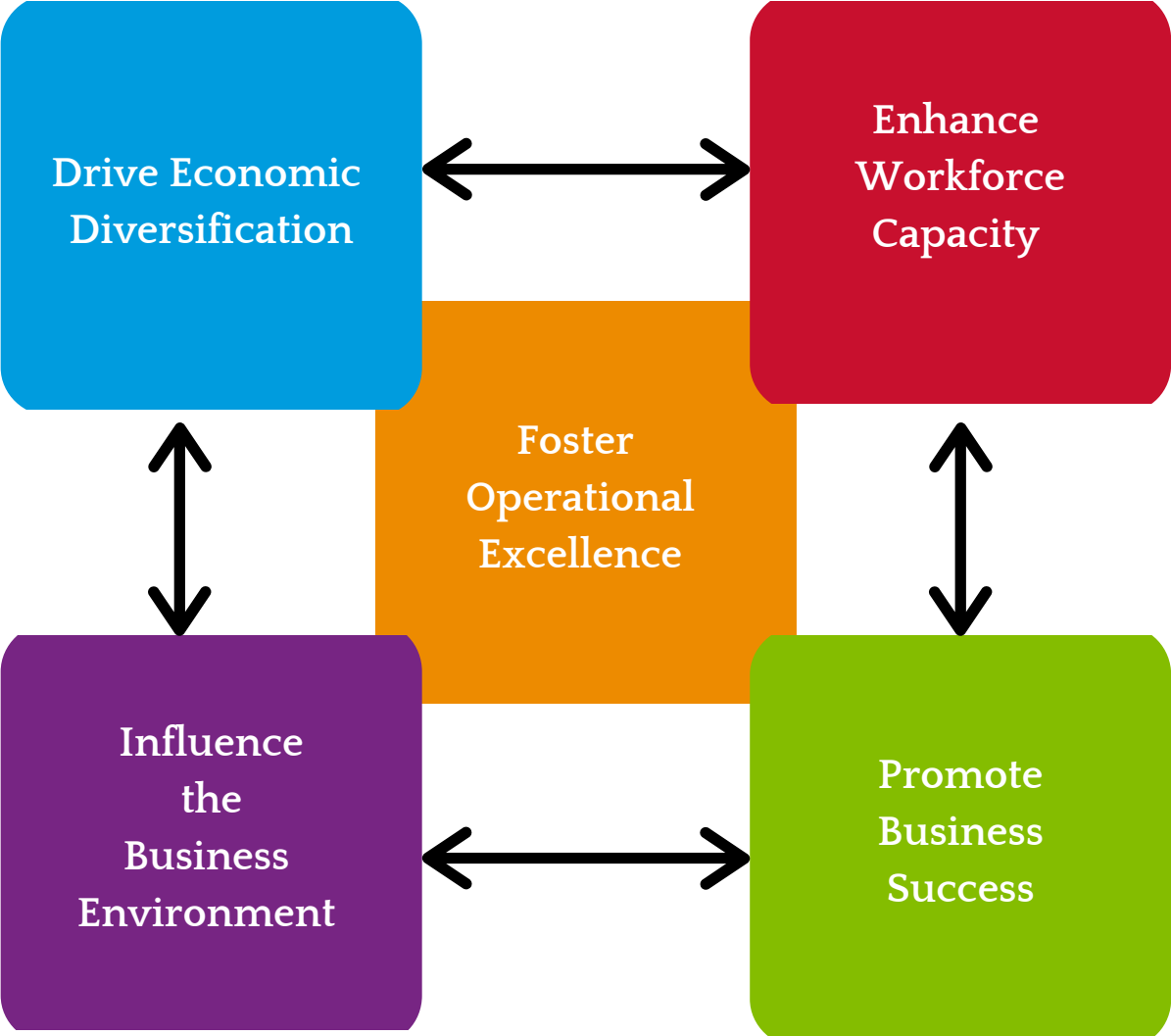
Enhance employee effectiveness, drive member value, and sustain financial strength

| Objective | Action |
|--|--|
| Optimize organization effectiveness | <p>Commit to a constancy of purpose and focus on strategic priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistently articulate organization roles, responsibilities, and expectations <p>Enhance Team and Board effectiveness and professional development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess current development/training opportunities• Identify best practices for professional development within the industry <p>Receive 5-Star US Chamber of Commerce Accreditation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drive, track, and report results in key areas of benchmarking, facilities, technology, human resources, finance, governance, programs, communications, and government affairs |
| Enhance member value & financial sustainability | <p>Communicate member value inside and outside organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing strategy for the GBA <p>Increase financial capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define short- & long-term financial requirements• Build & follow a financial model supporting capital needs, operations, and long-term projects <p>Focus on member value through process and service innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance new member recruitment and current member retention strategies |

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Connected

Given the integrated nature of the work, many objectives will likely be supported by the actions across multiple strategic priorities.



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Committed

We have organized our work by quarter beginning in April 2021 (Q2). The timeline below reflects when specific activities are projected to begin.

Q2

Business Environment

- Develop a legislative agenda process and agenda
- Communicate priorities with elected officials and business community

Business Success

- Conduct economic environment study
- Ascertain needs/challenges for Gaston businesses

Operational Excellence

- Commit to a constancy of purpose and focus on strategic priorities
- Communicate member value inside and outside organization

Q3

Economic Diversification

- Determine location drivers for workers

Business Environment

- Promote pro-growth policies and actions

Business Success

- Assess value of existing programs/services & augment
- Identify/establish relationships with underrepresented businesses

Q3 (cont'd)

Workforce Capacity

- Promote local talent development opportunities

Operational Excellence

- Increase financial capacity
- Enhance employee/ board effectiveness and professional development

Q4

Business Environment

- Advance local, state, and federal transportation infrastructure investments

Business Success

- Determine economic mobility & sustainability opportunities for underrepresented businesses

Workforce Capacity

- Promote local talent development opportunities

Operational Excellence

- Receive 5-Star US Chamber of Commerce Accreditation
- Focus on value for members through process and service innovation

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