



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.

Influence the Business Environment

Unify the collective voice of business to enrich Gaston County's economic diversification, overall reputation, and regional position

Promote Business Success

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

Enhance Workforce Capacity

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

Foster Operational Excellence

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

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Influence the Business Environment

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

Objective	Action
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Strengthen local, state, and federal government relations activity

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

Attract talent to Gaston County

Market Gaston County as an ideal place for talent relocation

Enhance advocacy of public - private economic growth efforts

- Promote pro-growth policies and actions**
 - Mobility/transportation
 - Land use planning
 - Utility Infrastructure
 - Workforce
 - High-speed internet

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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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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
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Q3

Business Environment

- Promote pro-growth policies and actions
- Determine location drivers for workers

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
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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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