

Anytown Chamber 2020:
Growing Business and Community for the Next Decade



November 19, 2010



Executive Summary

The Anytown Chamber of Commerce is a respected and influential leader and advocate for the community it serves. While ostensibly a business organization, much of the Chamber's work has focused on community initiatives and as a result, the Chamber is positioned as a valued community asset. In addition, 82% of members responding to an online survey indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their membership. From this solid foundation, the Chamber has built this strategic plan to take advantage of unique opportunities and to address critical challenges.

Importantly, this strategic plan, the Anytown 2020 Plan, is grounded in the recognition that the Chamber has a distinctive role to play in the community that requires continued evolution in its programs and services, effective partnerships and prudent but bold leadership on certain initiatives. The plan is focused on the next three years, but the fundamentals of the plan will continue to carry forward for subsequent years. The following goals and strategies provide a roadmap for the organization to lead the business community and the region toward greater prosperity in the next decade.



Mission and Vision

Mission: To be the primary advocate, voice and resource for businesses & organizations in the Anytown area.

To accomplish our mission, we will:

- Use our resources to be an influential regional leader to encourage, support, and foster the free enterprise system
- Work to maintain and improve the area's quality of life
- Maintain strong support for our existing industries
- Continue to promote and support economic development

Vision: To be a leading force in the growth of the Anytown area.



About the Planning Process

The 3D Strategic Planning Process utilized to develop this plan included an assessment of external and internal perceptions about the Anytown Chamber of Commerce over several weeks in August and September 2010. The information discovered through this process formed the backdrop to a planning conference for current Chamber board members and staff. The planning conference focused on five critical issues facing the organization. Participants of the conference and Chamber leadership determined the primary goals and strategies that make up this plan.



Plan Implementation

Strategic plans don't create success. Success for an organization comes when strategic objectives, strategies and tactics are fully implemented into the organization's operations, budget and governance. To ensure that this plan is fused into the Chamber's work going forward, we suggest the following implementation steps:

- Develop a communications plan to promote the Anytown 2020 Plan to members and the community
- Reflect the strategic objectives and tactics in annual operating plans and budgets
- Include a status update on the plan on board agendas at least quarterly
- Designate the immediate past president as the chief accountability officer vested with the responsibility to monitor the plan
- Base the annual board planning conference on this plan and focus
- Update the plan at the annual planning conference so it becomes a rolling three-year plan

Strategic Objective 1 – Grow Jobs and Attract Investment



The Chamber’s top priority is to create jobs and attract investment for the community. This requires the Chamber to effectively lead select economic development initiatives and partner with the Economic Development Foundation on other efforts. Specific strategies include:

Strategies	Tactics	Resources Needed	Timeline and Completion Date	Accountability
<p>1. Chamber is the private sector leader on economic development for the region, partnering with the Foundation to accomplish regional goals.</p>	<p>In today’s competitive climate for job growth, the Anytown region must enhance its economic development efforts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chamber will establish an Economic Development Committee. 	<p>Volunteers, preferably with ED expertise</p>	<p>Recruit group and start meetings by February 2011</p>	<p>Volunteers must attend 75% of meetings</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify Chamber’s role in economic development with leaders of the Foundation and obtain an agreement that the Chamber will lead on attracting specific sectors, for example, destination retail. 	<p>Executive Director work with EDF on devising a written agreement</p>	<p>Have signed agreement by mid-January 2011</p>	<p>Agreement must be signed by both the Chamber and the EDF</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in building the Chamber’s capacity to implement economic development activities to fill gaps not being addressed by the Foundation, including collecting and providing economic development data through a new website that provides information on available space, incentives, data and resources. 	<p>Time to accumulate data; help creating separate website</p>	<p>Create working website with at least basic information by March 2011</p>	<p>Executive Director will lead, working with all parties involved on the website - Economic Development Committee to assist in website creation</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task the Economic Development Committee with working with the City to create a comprehensive land use vision that supports business attraction by providing clear guidelines on locations for commercial development. 	<p>City Administrator, Planning & Zoning and City Council</p>	<p>Have a final plan/proposal by December 2011.</p>	<p>Economic Development Committee will be in charge of getting project completed</p>

<p>2. Chamber supports innovation and new business development for the region.</p>	<p>Position the Chamber as a job generator and business attractor. The Chamber should build its expertise and serve as a resource for innovation, entrepreneurship and business assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore existing resources in the community and determine what else is needed, including using retired former executives in mentor roles with new businesses. 	<p>Retired former executives as well as those with knowledge in business and development</p>	<p>Delegate this initiative to the Economic Development Committee that is to be formed</p>	<p>Include resources listed in Economic Development Committee who will handle this area</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serve as a clearinghouse for information and assistance in starting a business, for example, providing SBA information, a library of programs for business planning, etc. 	<p>Economic Development committee, SBA, city council and city administrator</p>	<p>Delegate this initiative to the Economic Development Committee that is to be formed</p>	<p>Executive Director will work with Economic Development Committee as well as business sources such as SBA to construct a cohesive plan/packet for business planning</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop programs for members and non-members on business skills, for example, writing a business plan, applying for a loan, etc. 	<p>Local business people with expertise in these types of areas</p>	<p>Delegate this initiative to the Economic Development Committee that is to be formed</p>	<p>Economic Development Committee in charge of training sessions to teach different business skills</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a recognition/awards program to focus on innovative businesses or outstanding entrepreneurs in the area. 	<p>Sell major sponsorship to cover costs</p>	<p>First award to be given at Annual Banquet - March/April 2012</p>	<p>Economic Development Committee, working with Public Relations Committee, will nominate and choose winner each year for award</p>

**Strategic Objective 2 –
Create Environment for Jobs and Growth
through Effective Public Policy**



Creating an environment conducive to growth is necessary to achieve economic prosperity for the Anytown region. As the voice of the business community, the Chamber will advocate for policies that promote a pro-business environment and support efficient and effective government.

Strategies	Tactics	Resources Needed	Timeline and Completion Date	Accountability
1. The Chamber's Issues Management and Government Relations Committee will thoughtfully advocate for effective and efficient government policies that make the region an attractive location for business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chamber will create a process for developing policy positions and then communicate the process to its members. 	Issues Management Committee, state and local representatives	Already occurring with legislative platform being created and voted on by members	Issues Management Committee continues process for each legislative year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chamber will develop programs to help educate its members on how it develops policies and why it advocates for certain issues. 	Issues Management Committee	Plan developed by January 2011	Issues Management Committee to develop ways to educate members on issues chosen and advocated for
2. The Chamber will advocate for policies that support a positive business climate in the area (local tax policy, infrastructure, amenities, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Escalate the timetable and enhance the design for the rebuilding of the Interstate Bridge. Address concerns with the Highway 100/Benson Road project. 	Issues Management Committee	Ongoing from now until project completion	Issues Management Committee to stay abreast of these issues and advocate for faster completion of projects

**Strategic Objective 3 –
Enhance the Anytown Region’s Quality of Life
to Attract Jobs, Investment and Population**



The Chamber is a visible, positive and effective partner and leader in creating a high quality of life that attracts people and business.

Strategies	Tactics	Resources Needed	Timeline and Completion Date	Accountability
<p>1. The Chamber will support and lead various community initiatives as it is able to based on its capacity, and as appropriate, based on its mission and plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position the Chamber in a leadership role advocating for major quality of life initiatives, such as the Community Rec. Center or school district. Develop key messages for each initiative, clearly articulating why the Chamber supports the project and how it benefits Chamber members and the broader business community. 	<p>Must choose a specific initiative</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Executive Director to monitor and recommend board action</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with the school district when in agreement on priority issues. 	<p>School Superintendent, school board</p>	<p>As issues arise</p>	<p>Issues Management Committee must stay abreast of school issues so to advocate when necessary</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chamber will evaluate all requests to support routine or traditional community events or initiatives (as opposed to major initiatives as described above) based on whether the event or initiative will provide financial resources to the Chamber, enhance the Chamber’s reputation or increase the organization’s visibility. 	<p>Evaluate each activity based on fit with mission and vision</p>	<p>Complete evaluation by August 2011</p>	<p>Board of Directors must evaluate events/activities to make sure they all fit within mission and vision</p>

<p>2. To enhance the regional leadership capacity of the Anytown, the Chamber will develop a Leadership Anytown program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study existing Chamber leadership programs from similar-sized communities. • Create a steering committee to guide initial development of the program and to assist in recruiting the first class. • Communicate the value of the Leadership Anytown program as a way to ensure continued great quality public and private sector leaders are engaged in the work of growing and governing Anytown. 	<p>Create steering committee from local business people as well as members of the Economic Development Committee</p>	<p>First class of Leadership Anytown will launch in 2012</p>	<p>Steering Committee will be in charge of creating and managing this program with the help of the Executive Director</p>
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**Strategic Objective 4 –
Achieve Organizational Excellence to Best Serve Members**

Recognizing that the organization continues to evolve in its management and governance, the Chamber should implement a variety of tools in order to ensure the organization operates efficiently and effectively going forward.

Strategies	Tactics	Resources Needed	Timeline and Completion Date	Accountability
<p>1. Restructure the Chamber’s board for success.</p>	<p>Continue evolving the organization to improve overall effectiveness and volunteer satisfaction. Refer to the Supplemental Report on Board Structure for details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board should adopt a policy governance model, including the profile of board members and what topics are appropriate for board discussion versus management decisions. • The board should complete an annual self-evaluation. • The board should develop a succession plan for the executive director. • Restructure the board agenda to focus on strategic issues versus tactics and implementation. 	<p>Focus and effort by president, Executive Committee and Executive Director</p>	<p>First phase should be completed by December 2011, ongoing thereafter</p>	<p>President, Executive Committee and Executive Director</p>
<p>2. Focus and prioritize program of work based on data and discipline in order to maximize member return on investment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and committees will undertake annual review of all programs and services (see attached sample program evaluation) to determine whether to continue, change or eliminate programs. • A full membership survey, including satisfaction with all programs and services, will be done annually. 	<p>Evaluate each activity and its fit within the mission and vision</p> <p>Example: Survey with changes specific to BVACC</p>	<p>Evaluate all current programs and make sure they fit provisions- complete evaluation by August 2011</p> <p>Conduct first survey by May 2011</p>	<p>Staff and Committees must evaluate to ensure fit within mission and vision</p> <p>Membership Committee leads survey process</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the development of a roundtable for industrial/manufacturing businesses as a way to add value to their memberships. • Before new programs are added, each will be evaluated based on the board adopted program evaluation criteria. 	Managers from Industrial Park member businesses	Commence July 2011	Have Issues Management Committee manage this roundtable by bringing any issues/agenda items that might pertain to industrial businesses
3. Increase member engagement in the Chamber.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize short-term, issue or event-based task forces as a way to invite members to become more involved and to try out members for future board service. 	Split up current fundraising committee into individual task forces for each specific event	January 2011	Dissolve current fundraising committee into task forces including a “Task force leaders group” consisting of leaders of each task force to meet quarterly or semi-annually to discuss fundraising efforts as a whole
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance volunteer recognition efforts by establishing Volunteer of the Year awards. 	Create sponsorship opportunities	Enhance by December 2011	Executive Director
4. Maintain clear boundaries and communications with the City of Anytown.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review annually the spoken and unspoken expectations of the Chamber by City staff and policymakers. • Develop key messages about the Chamber’s role in advocating on policy issues and its independence from the City on those issues. 	Chamber Executive Director & Executive Committee	Annually	Continue annual presentation to city council including our role in advocating on policy issues that arise throughout the year

**Strategic Objective 5 –
Provide Bold and Visible Leadership for the
Region**



The Chamber will select a major project that will benefit the Anytown region and commit staff and volunteer resources to providing bold and visible leadership on this project.

Strategies	Tactics	Resources Needed	Timeline and Completion Date	Accountability
<p>1. The Chamber board will use a SWOT analysis to determine which of the several potential projects the Chamber is most ideally positioned to play a leadership role and enjoy success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Among the potential projects would be attracting the state VA nursing home facility to the area and attracting a destination retailer to the area. See the Supplemental Report on Retail Attraction Strategy. 	<p>Economic Development Committee</p>	<p>VA nursing home: Continue to help until project is assigned to a community with help from Economic Development Committee once it is created</p>	<p>Destination retailer option to be passed on to Economic Development Committee for consideration</p>



Conclusion

Anytown 2020 is an ambitious plan that will challenge the organization to work harder and be better than in the past. It includes an extension of the Chamber's primary work as well as describes additional initiatives that will help achieve the goal of positioning the Chamber as the voice of business creating growth in the region. As noted in the implementation section of this plan, it is critical for the Chamber to assess and evaluate its performance against this plan on an ongoing basis and in particular, to make adjustments to the plan at the annual planning conference. There will likely be items in this plan that are not completed or are not effective and dropped. That is the nature of a dynamic plan. The Board's responsibility is to make thoughtful and informed judgments about changes to this plan.