



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026

Chamber | Visitors Bureau | Economic Development



ABOUT THE CHAMBER

Vision

The Santa Maria Valley is the heart of the Central Coast where community & business thrive.

Mission

As an essential catalyst for business growth, convener of leaders and influencers, and champion for a stronger Santa Maria Valley, we connect, inform, and influence business success.

Guiding Principles

- **Accountable:** We evaluate the impact of our work to ensure measurable value to our members and investors and support the priorities of our members and partners.
- **An Advocate:** We educate our community that business success is essential to overall community success and quality of life.
- **Ethical:** We are trustworthy, open to possibilities, and inclusive; we hold high expectations and conduct our business with honesty, respect, and transparency.
- **Inclusive:** We will improve equality of access and opportunity, with a specific focus on connecting the economically disadvantaged to business and community engagement opportunities.
- **Regional:** We collaborate across our region in economic development, legislative advocacy, and business support.
- **A Resource:** We connect members with best practices, business trends, successful ideas, and new partners.

Strategic Priorities

- Competitive & Inclusive Business Environment
- Community Development
- Workforce Development
- Business-Informed Leadership
- Organizational Resiliency

COMPETITIVE & INCLUSIVE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Be a catalyst in creating a regional business environment that maximizes economic vitality for the entire community

Address Community Issues Impacting Businesses & Economic Growth

- Advocate for policies and projects that lead to a full spectrum of housing options
- Support expansion of child care capacity in the community
- Advocate for economic vitality-enabling policies in City of Santa Maria's General Plan Update
- Explore feasibility of a property-based improvement district in Downtown Santa Maria
- Advocate for improvements in the City's and County's planning processes
- Prioritize retention and expansion of existing businesses through monthly business visits, strengthened business resource programs, etc.
- Research the viability of creating an Investor Fund Program to support new business formation

Leverage partnerships that maximize Santa Maria Valley benefits from local & regional economic growth initiatives

- Convene community coalition (Conduct public opinion campaign) to influence support for positive growth policies & decisions
- Expand engagement with VSFB on business & workforce initiatives
- Continue to participate in REACH & Tri-County Chamber Alliance to strengthen regional economy

Advance equity, inclusion and access to business and economic opportunities

- Expand impact of the Hispanic Business Committee beyond networking to business support services and educational offerings
- Expand number of diverse individuals engaged in Chamber and community leadership
- Intentional outreach to increase diversity minority participation in all Chamber/business activities
- Educate local businesses about best practices in equity/inclusion and advocate for wider adoption and practices



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Elevate attractiveness of the community by supporting investments in facilities and programs.



Support investments in the community assets that increase attractiveness of the Santa Maria Valley

- Complete Feasibility Study for potential Performing Arts/Conference Center and determine next steps
- Support investments in Public Art and other cultural enhancements
- Expand business formation/attraction by focusing on vacant structures and airport district properties

Support projects that increase the number and type of entertainment options available to residents and visitors

- Facilitate locally formed (or attract new) experiential businesses (e.g. restaurants, entertainment, sports, etc)
- Attract promoters to host large-format events in the SMV
- Broaden outreach around existing community events to attract regional and overnight participants



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Ensure businesses can count on a pipeline of workers trained for local jobs & careers.

Develop a strong regional talent pipeline to meet business and community needs

- Create a resource map to identify existing programs & services and gaps.
- Form Work-based Learning Committee (comprised of existing partners and new stakeholders) to expand business participation in WBL programs.
- Enhance Junior CEO program by providing additional investment and mentor opportunities; explore partnerships to scale number of youth served annually.

Expand Educational Partnerships

- Support Allan Hancock College's efforts to offer local, industry-serving, four-year degrees.
- Advocate for additional targeted training opportunities (e.g. Boot Camp model) aligned with local industry needs.



BUSINESS-INFORMED, CATALYTIC LEADERSHIP

Be a convener and trusted resource to improve community decisions affecting regional economic vitality



Convene businesses, residents, and community leadership around economic vitality topics

- Restructure Business & Government Roundtable to engage more businesses in advocacy efforts and increase general awareness of issues impacting business and economic vitality
- Explore ways to ensure State of the City, State of Education and State of Vandenberg forums create “two-way conversations” rather than simply report-outs
- Launch a community town hall program for issue education and idea exchange



Expand Chamber’s effectiveness as an influencer in the public square

- Develop and disseminate ballot guidance (e.g. position statements/recommendations, candidate questionnaires)
- Host candidate forums (Fall 2024, 2026, 2028)
- Develop and publish legislative scorecards
- Identify and support future community leaders
- Collaborate with LSMV Board to facilitate and track graduate participation in community leadership roles

Leverage communication channels to inform community

- Evaluate effectiveness and impact of existing communication channels; adjust as needed to optimize
- Next version of quarterly magazine
- Expand communications to include an overview of VB and EDC efforts
- Update website (2025)



ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCY

Ensure organization has financial and human resources to achieve its mission

Identify ways to expand capacity and impact

- Appoint a Board Committee to evaluate Chamber revenue best practices and develop a plan to expand and diversify income streams
- Research options for leveraging 501(c)(3) foundation to attract grants and other sources of funding that supports strategic focus work
- Continue to grow Chamber membership & investment

Succession planning/staff development

- Continue to evaluate staffing requirements; expand as needed and possible
- Identify opportunities for staff development and advancement





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