

2003-2006

strategic
plan



6 core strategies for **succeeding** in economic **development**



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leading change

As W. Edwards Deming said, “If you always do what you always did, you’ll always get what you always got.” All things change, and the Greater Akron Chamber is no exception. To ensure that we continue to have a vibrant and sustainable economy, Executive Committee members, volunteers, and staff mapped out the future direction of your Chamber.

Our overall goal was to create a three-year plan that would be clear, flexible, and focused on initiatives that would enhance our region’s competitive advantage, whether we lead or partner with others.

At the heart of many of the discussions was the need to develop a meaningful vision and mission; one that would define future direction, but could be expressed simply. A region’s competitive advantage can be enhanced by its quality of life. Thus, the Greater Akron Region must not only be a great place to do business—it has to be a great place to live. We all agreed that to attract companies and talent, we would need the arts, recreational opportunities, good infrastructure, quality educational systems, affordable housing and cost of living, and accessible quality health care. We would also require good employees, and quality employment opportunities.

It was this universal agreement that allowed us to define our vision which is:

“A high quality of life for all citizens of the Greater Akron Region.”

To achieve this vision requires a vibrant and sustainable economy supported by business, government, and education. The best way for the Chamber to contribute to the economy is through our mission:

“To promote economic development to benefit the people of the Greater Akron Region.”

The Chamber’s Strategic Plan defines Six Core Strategies for succeeding in economic development. We will focus on Business Development, Advocacy, Entrepreneurship, Business Services, Workforce Development, and Leadership.

A three-year financial resource plan, staffing, and governance structure will be developed to support our efforts in achieving the Strategic Plan.



6 strategies for success



business development

Market and promote the benefits of doing business in the Greater Akron Region in order to attract, retain, expand, and create business.

Tactics:

- Collaborate with Northeast Ohio chambers and economic development organizations to create a coordinated Northeast Ohio business attraction, retention, expansion, and development initiative.
- Strengthen the Chamber's economic development programs to increase business attraction, retention, expansion, and creation in the Greater Akron Region.

entrepreneurship

Promote innovation, technology development and commercialization, new business formation, and new venture opportunities to facilitate entrepreneurship.

Tactics:

- Promote the creation of a technology park, incubator, and accelerators to serve both technology start-up companies and existing manufacturers interested in commercializing new technologies.
- Promote the development of an Akron/NEO-based early-stage seed fund and/or venture capital fund in order to assist technology start-up companies and existing manufacturers and attract technology companies.
- Establish a defined network of technology providers to better assist start-up companies and existing manufacturers interested in commercializing new technologies.

workforce

Lead and coordinate activities to provide an educated and skilled labor force to be globally competitive and provide quality employment opportunities.

Tactics:

- Ensure high quality, one-stop Employment and Training Centers in the Greater Akron Region.
- Develop a talent attraction and retention strategy for the region.
- Be the catalyst for efforts to improve a competitive workforce aligning education and training programs to workforce needs.
- Be the voice of the business community by leading the Chamber's interaction with K-16 education.

business services

Provide membership benefits and services that give our members an operational and financial competitive advantage.

Tactics:

- Tailor current benefit, networking, and training programs to meet the needs of a diverse membership.
- Create alliances and partnerships with organizations to offer new business services and to grow our membership.
- Create and implement a communications plan for the benefit of members.
- Provide technical assistance and training programs to start-ups and small businesses.

advocacy

Represent the interests of its membership at the local, state, and federal levels by advocating for issues of importance to economic development.

Tactics:

- Inform members of key issues, work with other business groups on areas of common interest, and encourage greater participation by Chamber members in the political process.
- Provide opportunities for Chamber support of issues important to The University of Akron, Kent State University, and other local colleges/universities.
- Encourage regional infrastructure investment and coordinated planning of infrastructure expansion and improvements.
- Build relationships with individual businesses, business groups, educational institutions, and public officials to achieve legislative and regulatory goals.
- Provide opportunities for public officials and candidates to respond and share positions with the Chamber.

leadership

Provide quality leadership to further economic progress for the Greater Akron Region and Northeast Ohio.

Tactics:

- Position the Chamber to increase regional economic development by collaborating with regional development organizations.
- Organize business leadership on issues important to supporting the Chamber's mission and regional progress.



strategic plan task force leadership*

Co-Chairs:

Robert P. Reffner, Chairman, Greater Akron Chamber
Donald T. Misheff, Chair-Elect, Greater Akron Chamber

business development

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entrepreneurship

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workforce

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business service

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leadership

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*The Governance Committee Officers served as The Leadership Task Force Chairs.

