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GREATER BOSTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**

Message from the Chairman and the President & CEO

Over the past three years, the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce has focused on how our organization can have a more impactful and meaningful role in the business community for our region and for our members. In 2016, we delivered the first stage of that transformation with a revamped brand, mission, vision, and a new purpose statement: we exist to make Greater Boston the best place for all businesses and all people to thrive.

With the people and businesses of our membership in mind, we developed a GBCC Strategic Plan, setting forth bold goals, policy priorities, and tactical moves to help us realize our mission. This Strategic Plan is the result of an intensive and productive collaboration between the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, the Membership Committee, and the Chamber team. We are fortunate to work with leaders who expect and support bold ideas that will carry the Chamber’s success and impact far into the future and look forward to executing on this plan for the betterment of all Greater Boston.

Within these pages, you will see that we are positioned to be the most influential business association in the region thanks to our reputation as a thought leader on the most important issues facing Greater Boston and the Commonwealth. With this plan, we have the framework to build upon our strengths and ensure that all businesses and people of our region realize the innumerable benefits of their continued participation with the Chamber.



Paul J. Ayoub  
Board Chair,  
Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce  
Partner, Nutter



James E. Rooney  
President & CEO  
Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce

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## MISSION

We are the convener, voice and advocate of our diverse and collaborative membership who drive Greater Boston's success.

## VISION

Our membership will fully reflect the industries and businesses of our economy and together we will make Greater Boston one of the most prosperous regions in the world with economic opportunity available to all.

## PURPOSE

We exist to make Greater Boston the best place for all businesses and all people to thrive.







## MEMBERS FIRST

We are obsessed with member engagement.

## COLLABORATION

We recognize that the strength of the team is greater than the strength of the individual and choose to work with others to achieve collective success.

## COMMUNITY IMPACT

We believe in walking the talk. We ensure that the work we do, and how we do it, reflects our drive to make Boston the best place for businesses and people to thrive.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

We demonstrate reliability, trust, and strength of character to our colleagues and members.

## ADAPTABILITY

We embrace and encourage new and different ideas, opinions, and ways of working to move the Chamber forward.

## EQUITY

We create an environment where individuals from all backgrounds are included and have equal access, opportunity, and support for advancement.

## DATA DRIVEN

We use quality data to make decisions and produce high-impact results that provide value to our members and the Greater Boston business community.

## FUN

We celebrate our wins as a team and take time to have fun and enjoy each other's company.



## OUR STRATEGY

**WE WILL INCREASE ENGAGEMENT WITH OUR MEMBERS BY DEEPENING OUR EXPOSURE TO ALL EMPLOYEES WITHIN MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS AND BY LEVERAGING OUR REPUTATION AS THE MOST TRUSTED AND INFLUENTIAL BUSINESS ORGANIZATION IN MASSACHUSETTS.**

Measuring Engagement

2019 Goal: Create a baseline of engagement using three key metrics:

- 1) Member company engagement
- 2) Unique representative engagement
- 3) Number of engagement activities

At the end of the year, we will be able to make a data-driven decision about which engagement approach will be the most effective in achieving our goals, and update our strategic plan with metrics for 2020 and beyond.

## WHY ENGAGEMENT?

We believe that our diverse membership, which includes nearly every sector, industry, profession, and business size, is our organization's competitive advantage. Through our reputation as the leading convener and connector in the business community, we can enlist and channel the participatory energy of our membership to create a groundswell of solution-building and support around the key issues impacting our region's competitiveness. Our members derive a deeper value and collective sense of purpose from their Chamber memberships beyond traditional benefits such as visibility, business development, and policy advocacy. The heart of Chamber membership lies in working together to make Greater Boston the best place to live, work, and start and grow a business.

We also know that our long-term organizational and membership strategy depends on engaged members who understand this value and maximize the opportunities this presents. With Boston's shifting demographics – we are a younger and more diverse than ever before – the Chamber is examining how we are reaching new influencers within our member organizations and involving them in all the different aspects of the Chamber's work.



## TALENT & WORKFORCE

Advocate for and lead work aimed at preparing, attracting, and retaining a talented workforce

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Lead the business community in addressing economic opportunity for all

## REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

Position Greater Boston and Massachusetts as the leading region for business in the national and global market





## ASPIRATION

The Greater Boston Chamber will have a thriving and diverse talent pool that is prepared for the jobs of the future.

## TALENT & WORKFORCE

**Greater Boston's talented workforce isn't just a driving force of our economy. It's our competitive advantage. And this workforce is younger and more diverse than ever before.**

Among the 25 most populous U.S. cities, Boston has the highest concentration of 20 to 34-year-olds. And in Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville, this population grew much faster from 2000 to 2015 than the overall population in each of these cities.

Hispanic and Asian young adult populations in Boston grew more than 30 percent during that same time period, with more than 43 percent of the region's millennial population reporting as non-White or Hispanic.<sup>1</sup>

While businesses are flocking to Boston and citing access to unparalleled talent as their driving motivation, we know that there are economic challenges facing our workforce that, if left unchecked, will damage our ability to develop, attract, and retain the world-class talent our city is known for.

These challenges include:

- Access to quality and cost of education from early education and care, to career technical education, and higher education programs
- Cost of living issues, particularly around housing
- A deteriorating public transit system and heavily congested roads
- A reputation for being an unwelcoming place for people of color

**A key strategic priority for the Chamber moving forward will be to take our already-leading work aimed at preparing, attracting, and retaining a talented workforce to the next level.**

<sup>1</sup>City of Millennials: Improving the Future Prospects of Our Region and Its Young Adults, 2017



## ASPIRATION

Greater Boston will lead the nation in income equality and be known as the best city in the country for professionals and business of color to succeed.

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Greater Boston is experiencing incredible economic success and growth unlike any other city in the U.S. We are at the top of almost every ranking related to innovation, medicine and life sciences, public education systems, higher education institutions, and other key industries. **Despite the regions unprecedented success, it is increasingly apparent that not all of our businesses, residents, and workers are experiencing the benefits of this economic boom.** When we look at economic disparities along racial lines, the picture is particularly troubling.

- Boston ranks #4 in terms of economic mobility among the 50 largest metropolitan areas in the country; however, White families in metro Boston have a median net worth of \$247,500, while African-American families have a median net worth of \$8.<sup>2</sup>
- The family-sustaining annual wage in Boston is between \$57,000 - \$73,000. Median household income for Asian, Black, and Latino households in Boston is \$30-40,000/year, while White households' incomes are \$80,000/

year. Between 50,000 and 70,000 families, approximately half of all Boston families, are not making a family-sustaining wage.<sup>3</sup>

- The unemployment rate of Black/African-Americans and Hispanics in Boston is about 1.5 times the citywide average.<sup>4</sup>

Added to these statistics is Boston's ongoing reputation for being a city that is unwelcoming for people of color. Economic disparities stifle long-term economic growth and present hurdles to recruiting diverse talent and attracting minority-owned businesses. This is not limited to isolated events, but rather a larger structural disadvantage to communities of color to succeed in the private sector. **More attention is turning to the role of the business community as economic inequality is tied to racial inequality. The Chamber must show leadership – both as a civic obligation and business imperative in these discussions.**

<sup>2</sup>The Color of Wealth in Boston, 2015

<sup>3</sup>The Color of Wealth in Boston, 2015

<sup>4</sup>City of Boston Economic Inclusion Agenda, 2016



## ASPIRATION

Massachusetts will be the leading state for business in the nation and the world.

## REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

Greater Boston is an excellent place to live, work, and visit. The region compares favorably to other major U.S. metropolitan areas when considering nearly every significant quality of life factor. World class health care facilities, excellent academic institutions, access to startup capital, and vibrant cultural and historical centers are among the region's many assets. **As a result, Boston is considered one of the best places to live based on access to the region's significant physical assets. Similarly, Boston is viewed as one of the best places to start a business and continuously ranks either first or second from a life sciences cluster, social entrepreneur, women entrepreneur, and health funding perspective.**

According to a recent study, competitiveness was defined as a city's ability to attract capital, business, talent, and visitors. Based on these factors, Boston is currently ranked number three in the United States, behind New York and Chicago. However, Boston is projected to drop three spots from its current ranking and fall behind Washington, Los Angeles and San Francisco by the year 2025.<sup>5</sup>

Another study ranked Massachusetts number one in 2017 but now ranks our state eighth, showcasing the need to consistently focus on future improvements even when we are identified as the best.<sup>6</sup> Infrastructure, opportunity, and fiscal stability were key areas for improvement cited in the report. **The Chamber's goal is to ensure Greater Boston and Massachusetts reclaim their position as a competitive leaders not just in the U.S. but globally, as well.**

<sup>5</sup>The Economist Intelligence Unit, Hot spots 25: Benchmarking the future competitiveness of cities

<sup>6</sup>U.S. News & World Report, Best States 2018 (data was provided by McKinsey & Company's Leading States Index)

OPERATIONAL ALIGNMENT

This strategic plan is designed to create alignment for all programs, services, and public policy work provided by the Chamber. This includes an assessment of all current programs and services to ensure their purpose supports one or more of our strategic priorities.

| PUBLIC POLICY AREAS              | TALENT & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY | REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| TRANSPORTATION                   | ●                              | ●                    | ●                        |
| TAXES & GOOD GOVERNMENT          |                                | ●                    | ●                        |
| HOUSING                          | ●                              | ●                    | ●                        |
| EDUCATION                        | ●                              | ●                    |                          |
| HEALTH CARE                      |                                |                      | ●                        |
| CLIMATE READINESS                |                                |                      | ●                        |
| LEADERSHIP COUNCILS              | TALENT & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY | REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS |
| PUBLIC POLICY & GOV'T RELATIONS  | ●                              | ●                    | ●                        |
| TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE  | ●                              | ●                    | ●                        |
| TALENT & DEVELOPMENT             | ●                              | ●                    | ●                        |
| HEALTH CARE & LIFE SCIENCES      | ●                              |                      | ●                        |
| FINANCIAL SERVICES               |                                |                      | ●                        |
| ENERGY & SUSTAINABILITY          |                                |                      | ●                        |
| REGIONAL REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT | ●                              | ●                    | ●                        |
| HOSPITALITY & TOURISM            |                                |                      | ●                        |

| PROGRAMS & SERVICES        | TALENT & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY | REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| ALL IN FOR ADVANCEMENT     | ●                              | ●                    |                          |
| CHAMBER FELLOWSHIP         | ●                              |                      |                          |
| WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP         | ●                              | ●                    | ●                        |
| BOSTON'S FUTURE LEADERS    | ●                              |                      |                          |
| LEADERSHIP FORUM           | ●                              |                      |                          |
| CITY AWAKE                 | ●                              |                      | ●                        |
| FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW      | ●                              | ●                    |                          |
| PACESETTERS                |                                | ●                    | ●                        |
| TALENTSETTERS              | ●                              | ●                    |                          |
| CITY TO CITY               |                                |                      | ●                        |
| WOMEN'S NETWORK EVENTS     |                                | ●                    | ●                        |
| GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS FORUMS  |                                |                      | ●                        |
| EXECUTIVE FORUMS           |                                |                      | ●                        |
| SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR |                                | ●                    | ●                        |
| CHAMBER NETWORKING GROUP   | ●                              | ●                    |                          |
| SEASONAL RECEPTIONS        | ●                              | ●                    |                          |





## TRANSPORTATION

Year after year, our members point to transportation as their top policy priority. **Transportation and infrastructure are vital underpinnings of the regional economy and they are critical to our workforce.**

On any given weekday between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m., more than 1.5 million people commute to work in Greater Boston using cars, public transit, bikes, walking, car share, or other modes of transportation.<sup>7</sup> As a result, Boston experiences some of the worst road congestion in the United States. At the same time, much of Boston’s public transit is overcrowded during rush hour, even with ridership declines in recent years.

**For Greater Boston to continue being a leading economy, the region must strengthen its transportation systems, including public transit. Furthermore, transportation is a pathway to address other important policy issues, such as the region’s housing crisis, climate readiness, and even health outcomes for residents.**

To strengthen the system, the Chamber supports strategic investments in public transportation that will improve performance and allow for increased ridership to reduce traffic congestion on our roads. The first step is to prioritize planned and proposed investments for public transportation using a set of criteria that measures the outcomes of each proposal. The next step is to have clear estimates of the costs associated with each. The Chamber also supports using policies to induce or incentivize behaviors that increase ridership and reduce congestion.

<sup>7</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B08302, Time Leaving Home To Go To Work - Universe: Workers 16 years and over who did not work at home)





## TAXES & GOOD GOVERNMENT

A region's competitiveness relies on several factors, including many of our organizational and policy priorities like talent and transportation.

**It is important for Greater Boston and Massachusetts to maintain a welcoming business climate so that current and future residents will have good quality jobs.**

The Chamber believes the state's policies should reward investment in Massachusetts and encourage employers to make good policy choices rather than focusing narrowly on mandates and enforcement. To remain competitive with other states, Massachusetts must also identify the areas where it is an outlier and make appropriate policy changes, such as updating its alignment with the federal tax code. In addition to sound tax policies, a strong business climate has a government that makes good investments to support proven programs like the earned income tax credit.





## HOUSING

With the third highest housing costs among the nation's 25 largest metro areas, housing is an urgent issue for Greater Boston.<sup>8</sup> For employers in the region, the high cost of housing affects their ability to attract and retain a talented workforce. To retain our talented workforce — the region's competitive advantage — we need to provide workforce housing options that employees can afford and with access to transit and other amenities.

Although many factors contribute to Boston's high housing costs, the core problem is that demand outpaces supply. Population is rising but housing production lags: despite having the 10th largest population among metro areas, Boston ranked 18th in the number of housing units permitted in 2016.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, factors such as seniors aging in place, the delayed formation of families, and the increased desire to live in urban areas expand the mismatch between demand and available supply. The result is a tightening grip that drives home prices higher and homeownership

rates down, especially among our region's younger workforce.

The Chamber focuses its advocacy efforts on increasing the workforce housing supply in Boston and neighboring communities. This includes supporting legislation to increase supply, avoiding policies that will increase costs of building, and supporting efforts to speed up the permitting process and increase workforce housing development.

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<sup>8</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B25105, Median Monthly Housing Costs (Dollars).

<sup>9</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 Building Permits Survey.





## HEALTH CARE

Massachusetts is synonymous with world-class health care and research. The state boasts a thriving ecosystem of medical and research institutions, life science and medical device businesses, professional services with expertise to support these fields, and many more health care leaders.

The number of health care jobs across the state grew 94 percent between 1990 and 2018, now representing the largest sector in Massachusetts, accounting for 17.4 percent of all jobs.<sup>10</sup>

Health care is a central component of our state’s economy, reputation, and quality of life, but it also presents a challenge for policymakers. In fiscal 2019, health care costs are projected to consume more than 40 percent of our state budget, diverting resources from other important public services like transportation and education.<sup>11</sup> In addition, businesses – particularly small businesses – and individuals also frequently cite rising health care costs as a significant concern.

Health care policy must strike a balance between supporting the state’s cornerstone industry and ensuring that world-class care is accessible and affordable for residents, businesses, and the state budget. By leveraging our diverse membership, which includes a wide-range of health care industry businesses and professionals, the Chamber is uniquely positioned to seek alignment for addressing cost concerns, improving access, and for promoting transparency.

<sup>10</sup>Bureau of Labor Statistics, Monthly Current Employment Statistics, Nov. 2018.

<sup>11</sup>Chapter 154 of the Acts of 2018.





## EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

**A majority of the region’s labor force holding a bachelor’s degree or higher, making its world-class workforce a competitive advantage for Greater Boston and the state.<sup>12</sup>**

Talent drives our region’s economic success by producing ideas, goods and services that are made in Massachusetts and have a global impact. Investing in and fostering the talent in our current and future workforce will keep Greater Boston a global competitor and create new opportunities for residents and businesses alike.

**The business community – as a primary customer of the public education system – must take an active role in cultivating our workforce because it influences our region’s long-term success.**

This involves informing and directing efforts that prepare our native workforce and pipeline, such as investing in early education and promoting career/vocational technical education. It also means supporting federal immigration policies that allow Boston to continue attracting the best and the brightest. For our existing workforce,

we can adapt to the future of work by promoting life-long learning and computer science education.

<sup>12</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B15001, Age by Educational Attainment for the Population 18 Years and Over; Chamber analysis of residents aged 25 to 64.





## CLIMATE READINESS

With increasing attention from businesses on the need to be ready for and adapt to climate changes, the Chamber recognizes the need to include climate readiness as a policy priority. Over the next year, the Chamber will research the many aspects of climate readiness and resiliency to determine the best role for the business voice in developing and implementing policies. As we develop the Chamber's policy approach to climate issues, we will use our programs to highlight and improve our understanding of this critical issue.



# 2019 KEY OBJECTIVES

After a year of thoughtful reflection and bold thinking, we are equipped with a solid strategic plan designed to bring added value to our members and set our organization up for long term success and growth. The Chamber team has developed a framework of clearly-defined and measurable goals. All of the goals outlined tie directly back to our core strategic statement: to increase our engagement with our members at all levels of their organizations. In addition, we also are underway with an evaluation to ensure that the technology systems and tools we have in place will maximize our efforts to implement and accurately track and measure our engagement efforts.

We believe the following objectives best position us to achieve our strategic goals. In addition, we will continue to focus on all of the other initiatives and programs underway that have made the Chamber the successful and impactful organization it is today. The Chamber will update these key objectives annually and, during that time, will review the entire strategic report for appropriate updates.

- 01** // Create and execute a comprehensive onboarding plan that engages first-year members and improves retention
- 02** // Create and execute a bold marketing campaign designed to drive inbound leads to the pipeline
- 03** // Develop a plan, tools and tactics to help all staff members increase employee engagement
- 04** // Strengthen Chamber's reputation for data-backed public policy and research by expanding our media and stakeholder reach
- 05** // Establish GBCC as a leading business voice on transportation policy and influence policymaking
- 06** // Assess current leadership development programs and evaluate expansion into other talent and workforce development areas
- 07** // Create an internship program for college students of color
- 08** // Enhance and grow City Awake program and increase participation of member organizations
- 09** // Enhance and grow Pacesetters program and embed in operational activities
- 10** // Complete a business intelligence assessment around process, data and people; execute recommendations based on budget



