

The Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce promotes the community and its economy by attracting and supporting local businesses, and protecting the interests of its members and the community.

The Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce is here to serve you. Please contact us or stop by our office in downtown New Braunfels if you have any questions about our membership, programs or events, or the community.

CONTACT US

The Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, Inc.

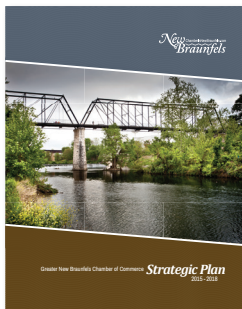
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On The Cover: The Faust Street Bridge towers high above the Guadalupe River in New Braunfels. This historic and rare Whipple Truss Bridge was built in 1887 as one of the first “toll-free” bridges in Texas. It now carries pedestrians and bicyclists.



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Welcome

The Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, Inc. is proud to present our 2015-2018 Strategic Plan. The Chamber is dedicated to making New Braunfels a superior community, and this plan inspires us and enables us to do just that. We are dedicated to helping create a flourishing community and economy. This plan lays out how we will attract and strengthen businesses, advocate for business friendly policy, maintain our unique culture, and expand educational opportunities.

The Chamber takes a proactive role in making New Braunfels an ideal place to live, work and play. This is defined in four critical areas of focus as we strive to strengthen the local economy, be the voice of business, advance community excellence, and provide value to our members. These initiatives will also help advance the Chamber's mission of promoting the civic and commercial progress of New Braunfels.

New Braunfels is poised in a prime position to create a prosperous future for all residents and businesses. The Chamber will work diligently with our many community partners and public servants to progress the strategies and objectives outlined in this plan, as well as help them reach their goals.

The development of this plan would not have been possible without the participation of our members and Board of Directors. They contributed their time and talent to help create the path forward for this organization and the community. This plan highlights the Board of Directors' commitment to helping New Braunfels grow while preserving our valued culture and customs.

With help from our business and civic leaders, the Chamber has produced an initiative to strengthen the community; thereby strengthening your business. The tactics included in this plan require the support and participation of the business community. Please spend some time getting to know how we plan to better New Braunfels.

We encourage you to get involved with the Chamber to help us shape the future of New Braunfels. We need you providing your knowledge, experience and vigor to help us make these goals a reality, so we can continue to be a place where every person and every business thrives.

The Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, Inc.



Vision Statement

The Chamber is known by New Braunfelsers as helping them achieve the American Dream.

Mission Statement

The purpose of The Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, Inc. is to promote the civic and commercial progress of the area.

Our Core Ideology and Values

The Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce's core purpose is to advocate for initiatives that are in the best interest of the entire business community and to help each business define and achieve success.



Core Values

Integrity

The character to be trustworthy and honest and the competence to deliver on our commitments.

Great Expectations

Exceed the expectations of stakeholders (members, staff, customers and Board members) in everything we do today and in the future.

Focus

Stay on task and achieve the goals we set. The courage to say "No" when appropriate.

Innovation & Creativity

Be creative and inventive to solve problems and develop solutions to meet the needs of our stakeholders.

Enthusiasm

Have an environment that is fun and where the staff exhibit enthusiasm and motivation for their career.

Vision

Identify what we need to do today to preserve our community's wealth and quality of life over the next 10 – 20 years.

Strengths & Opportunities for New Braunfels



A successful strategic plan requires an accurate appraisal of New Braunfels' strengths and opportunities. Before moving forward, we must be candid about the areas where we are succeeding as well as obstacles in the path to sustain our strategic position.

Strengths

When evaluating the economic strengths of our area and comparing them to similar communities, it is clear that we have many significant advantages that can be leveraged, including:

- ✓ **Access to Markets** – Strategically located in the center of the Austin-San Antonio corridor.
- ✓ **Transportation** – The city has easy access to I-35 and I-10, and ongoing intercity road projects.
- ✓ **Public Service and Volunteerism** – There is a strong sense of civic responsibility via volunteerism throughout the community with multiple organizations.
- ✓ **Quality of Life** – Our community is located in the scenic hill country with two rivers and well known attractions, restaurants, and shopping.
- ✓ **Labor Market** – Texas is a right-to-work state and New Braunfels has a labor force draw within 30 minutes of over 400,000.
- ✓ **Financial Capital** – The city is enjoying double-digit sales tax revenues and property appraisal growth. The economic sales tax corporation is well-capitalized and voters have approved bond issues to provide needed services and infrastructure.
- ✓ **Low Tax Rate** – We have one of the lowest municipal property tax rates in the Austin-San Antonio metro areas.
- ✓ **Growth Rate** – New Braunfels is ranked as the 8th fastest-growing city in Texas, and 18th nationally for cities over 50,000 in population. 21+ economic benchmarks have been trending upward for more than 12 years.
- ✓ **Education & Training** – Both ISDs have career-ready programs and the Central Texas Technology Center is operated by Alamo Colleges. Phase 2 of the CTTC expansion is in process for Fall 2016 classes. The area also offers several other post-secondary and graduate level degree options.
- ✓ **Strong Brand** – New Braunfels is known around the state as a prime place to visit.
- ✓ **Business Climate** – Strong public-private partnerships locally and regionally, as well as on the state and national level, is a foundational principle locally.

Opportunities

Our area also has a number of opportunities and challenges, both real and perceived, which must be addressed to ensure our economic future.

- ✓ **Sites and Facilities** – New Braunfels has a minimal inventory of available business sites and buildings.
- ✓ **Housing for Workforce** – Initiatives for additional workforce housing have had limited success and building and fee requirements add to the overall cost burden.
- ✓ **Labor Market** – Both hard and soft skills are cited as lacking by private-sector employers. Employers also complain that it is difficult to retain talented employees.
- ✓ **Transportation** – Because there is no mass transit system, residents are dependent on automobiles for transportation to and from work sites.
- ✓ **Business Climate** – The regulatory climate can be burdensome due to, among other things, inconsistencies in permitting and the approval process on the local level.
- ✓ **Infrastructure** – Growth in population has placed stress on existing roads and other infrastructure and new infrastructure is needed.



These Challenges Are Not Insurmountable

The City Economic Development Strategic Plan (2012-16) provides a blueprint to convert several of these opportunities into strengths. The Chamber staff and City staff have been tasked with facilitating and accomplishing these goals.

Where We Are Going...



The Chamber's strategic plan is a four-year initiative to promote our strengths, expand our existing businesses and business opportunities, and significantly improve the economic future for all who call New Braunfels home.

...And How We Are Going To Get There

Our priorities will focus on the following:

- ✓ **Strengthen the Local Economy** – Support and enhance a flourishing economic environment in New Braunfels.
- ✓ **Be The Voice of Business** – Support an environment where business thrives.
- ✓ **Advance Community Excellence** – Promote New Braunfels as the premier community for businesses and residents to live, work and play.
- ✓ **Provide Value to Members** – Provide opportunities through education, support and inclusion.





Priority Area 1: Strengthen The Local Economy

Support and enhance a flourishing economic environment in New Braunfels

Barriers: *Small market, out-migration, lack of shovel-ready locations (land and buildings), lack of tech infrastructure, water and transportation issues, convention center hotel, competition (local, regional, national), funding (public and private for infrastructure), business incentives, economic climate, affordable and available worker housing, and workforce skill shortages.*

Success Metrics: *Partnerships/collaborations, qualified projects, community visits, new investments, new or retained jobs, workforce initiatives, business expansions, start-ups, business retention visits.*

Objective A: Secure suitable building space to attract and retain primary employers consistent with the community's identified target industries.

Strategy 1: Offer optimum industrial/commercial spaces for prospective businesses.

Tactics:

- ✓ Understand the needs of potential and existing employers for space.
- ✓ Support the development and redevelopment of building sites.
- ✓ Support City Economic Development Strategic Plan.
- ✓ Continue to identify and support public/private partnerships to facilitate suitable building space to support targeted industries.

Strategy 2: Support the development of a downtown hotel for New Braunfels.

Tactics:

- ✓ Continue in a support role to City Staff to implement its City Economic Development Strategy.
- ✓ Collaborate on a vision for the selected site of the downtown hotel.
- ✓ Incorporate a P3 policy to engage the private sector and solicit proposals for development.

Objective B: Attract premier businesses to the New Braunfels area.

Strategy 1: Support the advancement of business infrastructure.

Tactics:

- ✓ Expand fiber optics affordability and availability.
- ✓ Continue to support the improvement and expansion of utilities.
- ✓ Continue to support the improvement and expansion of roads.
- ✓ Continue to support the improvement and expansion of drainage.
- ✓ Continue to support the improvement and expansion of water quantity.

Strategy 2: Recruit primary employers in targeted industry sectors.

Tactics:

- ✓ Utilize the New Braunfels EDC marketing plan as a guide.
- ✓ Target industries that pay above average wages.
- ✓ Support the City's Economic Development Strategy.
- ✓ Support the development of additional commercial-industrial inventory.
- ✓ Market to non-weather or natural resource (water) dependent types of businesses.

Objective C: Strengthen existing businesses.

Strategy 1: Educate and advocate for business.

Tactics:

- ✓ Provide peer-to-peer opportunities for businesses to discuss issues and learn from one another.
- ✓ Invite public servants to tour and learn about the benefits of existing businesses in the area.
- ✓ Provide liaison support to the City for local business expansion projects.
- ✓ Communicate the incentives available for business expansions.

Strategy 2: Support build-ready sites to increase the opportunity for expedited business expansion.

Tactics:

- ✓ Promote build-ready site certification or similar tools for expedited occupancy.
- ✓ Create and integrate marketing campaigns around available building space.

Objective D: Cultivate a quality and qualified workforce.

Strategy 1: Support quality of life projects that attract and retain skilled workers.

Tactics:

- ✓ Attract a grocery store to the FM 306 and I-35 intersection.
- ✓ Support Recreation Center/Sports Complex development that facilitates economic development.
- ✓ Support walk-ability and bike ride-ability areas.
- ✓ Expand the www.workinnewbraunfels.com site.

Strategy 2: Develop industry specific programs to enhance skills development.

Tactics:

- ✓ Support expansion of the Central Texas Technology Center.
- ✓ Collaborate on and host a portal of higher education opportunities on the Chamber website.
- ✓ Organize quarterly meetings of private sector employers and education providers to discuss skills shortages and training needs.
- ✓ Communicate workforce skills shortages and identify training needs.
- ✓ Build on CTTC, Comal ISD, and New Braunfels ISD efforts, in partnership with NBMA and others, to identify and encourage meaningful employment experiences for students enrolled in technical and career education and secondary education programs.
- ✓ Extend CTTC into “shop” programs for apprenticeships and internships.
- ✓ Support legislation to fund skills development programs.
- ✓ Expand/revive career tech education in local ISDs.
- ✓ Facilitate training packages for target industries as part of business expansion incentives.
- ✓ Create marketing and promotional materials for one-stop shop opportunities to engage private sector employers and students in an internship exchange program.
- ✓ Enhance linkages between the local employers, ISDs, and CTTC to partner to develop technical and career educational curricula in New Braunfels.

Objective E: Ensure that New Braunfels remains a viable tourist and cultural destination.

Strategy 1: Increase, improve and expand products for the local visitor industry.

Tactics:

- ✓ Execute the CVB current five-year professional services agreement (2014-19).
- ✓ Attract leisure, business and group travel, especially during the fall and winter seasons.
- ✓ Attract the family and cultural-heritage market through CVB sub-committees and a continued advertising/public relations campaign.
- ✓ Market the local cultural and heritage industry via a new campaign convertible to electronic and social mediums.
- ✓ Evaluate initiatives for increasing local tourism.
- ✓ Continue to collaborate with the local visitor industry and community groups to accomplish goals.
- ✓ Coordinate messaging on river marketing with stakeholders, government and citizens.
- ✓ Assist City with hike and bike trails connecting to visitor destinations.

- ✓ Act as coordinator of special events logistics.
- ✓ Encourage and support preservation of historic buildings in the community.
- ✓ Support community sports venue development that creates positive economic impact.
- ✓ Educate the community on natatorium benefits.

Strategy 2: Facilitate large downtown investment to support tourism, cultural and recreational amenities.

Tactic:

- ✓ Support the development of a downtown hotel adjacent to the New Braunfels Civic Convention Center with a capacity of 130-150 rooms as per City Economic Development Strategic Plan (2012-16).



Priority Area 2: Be The Voice of Business

Support an environment where business thrives

Barriers: Resources for infrastructure improvement and growth, AAMPO, public policy, aging infrastructure, area growth, lack of awareness and understanding about infrastructure needs, bureaucracy (permits and codes).

Success Metrics: Partnerships/collaborations, initiatives and impacts, membership growth, stakeholder feedback.

Objective A: Increase resources for infrastructure.

Strategy 1: Gain more influence at regional authorities, such as the Alamo Area MPO.

Tactics:

- ✓ Continue the development and influence of the Highway 46 Coalition.
- ✓ Maintain membership in groups such as the Guadalupe Basin Coalition.
- ✓ Educate local representatives to regional authorities on local priority needs.

Strategy 2: Increase awareness of the critical infrastructure needs of the area.

Tactics:

- ✓ Educate elected officials on critical needs.
- ✓ Use Chamber communications avenues to educate citizens on the needs and status of issues.
- ✓ Leverage Chamber events to educate members on needs and status of infrastructure issues.
- ✓ Create new educational forums to assist in the education of members and citizens.
- ✓ Create a Speaker's Bureau of knowledgeable experts to educate members and citizens.

Strategy 3: Pursue additional funding sources for infrastructure needs.

Tactics:

- ✓ Create a research task force to identify funding sources.
- ✓ Encourage public/private partnerships.

Objective B: Increase collaboration with local public servants.

Strategy 1: Develop relationships at all levels of government.

Tactics:

- ✓ Create and maintain a database of local public servant contacts.
- ✓ Invite key contacts to committee and Board meetings.
- ✓ Participate in City University.
- ✓ Publicly recognize the efforts of different agencies.

Strategy 2: Identify opportunities for collaboration.

Tactics:

- ✓ Identify ongoing projects and initiatives.
- ✓ Propose alternative solutions to challenges.

Objective C: Influence local, state and national policy.

Strategy 1: Leverage existing local, regional and national relationships.

Tactics:

- ✓ Maintain memberships and active roles in state and national organizations.
- ✓ Tap into other organizations in which our members are active.
- ✓ Invite policy makers to participate in Chamber programs and meetings.

Strategy 2: Foster joint efforts with local government to influence outcomes.

Tactics:

- ✓ Continue annual trip to Washington D.C. with City representatives
- ✓ Take a more proactive role with local government outreach initiatives.

Strategy 3: Be an information resource for policy makers and the business community.

Tactics:

- ✓ Create legislative agendas and present to local, state and national officials.
- ✓ Continue and expand the Texas Legislative Conference.
- ✓ Maintain and improve communication with policy makers.
- ✓ Facilitate quarterly panel forums to discuss and address multiple topics of concern to our members and the business community (ranging from local development policy, education, state-level taxation, and infrastructure maintenance and initiatives).
- ✓ Develop a web-based “one stop site” to provide information and materials relevant to the business community.



Priority Area 3: Advance Community Excellence

Promote New Braunfels as the premier community for businesses and residents to live, work and play

Barriers: Population growth can dilute our unique culture, lack of financial resources.

Success Metrics: Partnerships/collaborations, qualified projects, community visits, new investments, new or retained jobs, workforce initiatives, international projects, business expansions, start-ups, business retention visits.

Objective A: Maintain the unique culture of New Braunfels.

Strategy 1: Celebrate our unique culture and assets.

Tactics:

- ✓ Continue promoting local heritage events.
- ✓ Continue to promote other current events in place that enhance the local culture.

Strategy 2: Educate and increase attendance at local cultural events.

Tactics:

- ✓ Provide educational orientations at higher education campuses and through the ISDs.
- ✓ Create student ambassadors from the Young Leaders of New Braunfels program.
- ✓ Create a social media campaign (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) to assist with event success.

Objective B: Improve housing opportunities in the community.

Strategy 1: Identify local housing needs.

Tactics:

- ✓ Conduct research on the current and emerging housing needs for the area.
- ✓ Share research information with developers and local government agencies.
- ✓ Work with the City to expand developmental opportunities in the area.

Objective C: Promote, develop and continue to offer leadership programs.

Strategy 1: Educate the business community on how to become a civic leader in New Braunfels.

Tactics:

- ✓ Provide seminars on civic leadership opportunities.
- ✓ Promote City University to Chamber members.
- ✓ Tap Leadership New Braunfels alumni for City boards and commissions.

Objective D: Expand educational opportunities in the community.

Strategy 1: Promote and continue partnership opportunities for K – 12.

Tactics:

- ✓ Develop partnerships for internships and apprenticeships for high school students.
- ✓ Create awareness of career-ready needs of employers.
- ✓ Advocate for local ISDs, CTTC and Alamo Colleges.

Strategy 2: Promote and continue partnership opportunities for higher education

Tactics:

- ✓ Support the First Step Initiative of the Braunfels Foundation Trust.
- ✓ Create awareness of HB-5 opportunities.
- ✓ Submit reports at Chamber board meetings twice a year.
- ✓ Leverage EDF and similar board meetings.
- ✓ Provide information for post-secondary students on the Chamber's website.



Priority Area 4: Provide Value to Members

Provide opportunities through education, support and inclusion

Barriers: Awareness of what the Chamber offers, effective communication, targeting audiences with the correct mediums, identifying the needs of the membership, insufficient visibility with some members, perception of being cliquish

Success Metrics: Partnerships/collaborations, membership growth, renewal rates, stakeholder feedback.

Objective A: Increase member engagement.

Strategy 1: Create awareness of what the Chamber offers.

Tactics:

- ✓ Create a “Do You Know” campaign.
- ✓ Collect and use testimonials from members on the value of Chamber benefits.
- ✓ Increase member-to-member contact to educate members and invite them to attend programs.
- ✓ List activities/programs by time frame.

Strategy 2: Engage the low or non-engaged member.

Tactics:

- ✓ Conduct outreach to low or non-engaged members.
- ✓ Continue Young Professional research on needs and interests.
- ✓ Leverage WebLink to collect, mine and share information collaboratively among staff.

Strategy 3: Create a new membership dues model that aligns with member needs.

Tactics:

- ✓ Identify the needs and interests of membership segments using demographic and psychographic variables.
- ✓ Explore best practices in the chamber industry for designing new membership models and transitions.
- ✓ Evolve the “fair share” dues structure to a model that provides targeted benefits.
- ✓ Create a task force that represents membership segments to develop a new model that leverages our existing benefits and explores new opportunities to offer.
- ✓ Develop an implementation plan to transition to the new model.
- ✓ Add additional contract sales team members.

Objective B: Offer benefits that give members a competitive edge.

Strategy 1: Help members to access new markets and new customers.

Tactics:

- ✓ Continue to offer spotlight opportunities to showcase members and their businesses (including the person who wins at mixers and social media posts).
- ✓ Identify ways to leverage our website traffic to create more opportunities for our members and provide self-serve options for members.
- ✓ Continue to promote members through Business Trade Shows.
- ✓ Continue to promote members through the Business Directory and on the website.
- ✓ Continue to provide sponsorship opportunities for members.
- ✓ Develop joint mixers with other local organizations (including chambers).

Strategy 2: Provide resources that help small businesses survive and thrive.

Tactics:

- ✓ Promote SBDC small business training.
- ✓ Provide business mentoring.
- ✓ Educate members about Chamber benefits and partnerships through New Member Orientations.
- ✓ Provide low cost, on-demand training on a variety of topics.
- ✓ Continue to promote the Micro-Lending Program.

Summary

For the 2015 – 2018 strategic plan to be successful, we need leadership as well as involvement from a broad base of community leaders. The Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, Inc. will provide the staffing and overall management of this plan, but the execution of these priority goals and the opportunity to succeed relies on our volunteer leaders and the engagement of our members.

This plan is distinguished by its aggressiveness, transparency and commitment to evaluating its progress by established benchmarks. This plan will be achieved through strong leadership, dedication and broad collaboration. We will know which goals we are achieving and which need more attention, but we need your support to make it happen. Join our efforts to keep New Braunfels THE best place to live, work and play.



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