



## Policy Platform

Growth in local employment, along with increases in personal and business income is essential to the economic well-being of the community. The Chamber is committed to ensuring that local employers remain strong and competitive, and that new businesses are attracted to, and created within, our region.

The Chamber is also committed to the improvement of community attributes that materially influence decisions by employers and employees to locate and remain in the community, including the quality of health care, educational achievement, school district test scores, public safety and other factors.

These efforts should be focused on the goal of ensuring Walnut Creek is the regional retail, office, medical and innovation hub of Contra Costa County.

The Chamber serves as the voice of business in advocating for policies and programs which create an environment in which business can thrive and expand. As part of our advocacy efforts, the Chamber has identified the following areas that we believe are critical to that environment and, therefore, require active monitoring and engagement on behalf of our members.

**AGRICULTURE.** The Chamber supports efforts to enhance the regional, national, and international competitiveness of the regional agricultural industry. We advocate for ...

- efforts to ensure that necessary resources, e.g. water, power, labor, are available to meet the needs of local agriculture industries.
- land use planning policies and growth boundaries that provide reliable and predictable growth patterns which conserve viable agricultural lands and allow farm owners to anticipate changes in surrounding land uses.
- ensuring that new regulations or legislation are required to demonstrate measurable benefits which outweigh increased costs of production.

**AIR, WATER & THE ENVIRONMENT.** The Chamber supports comprehensive, broad-based efforts to address poor air quality and ever shrinking water availability, while ensuring that regulations and protections are not misused, duplicative, or burdensome. We advocate for ...

- reasonable implementation and streamlining of environmental regulations, particularly those that incentivize voluntary compliance.
- efforts to ensure that regulations are effective and do not prohibit job creation or slow economic growth.
- comprehensive, statewide solutions that ensure adequate water supplies, through a combined strategy of conservation, reuse, groundwater recharge, and new/expanded surface storage.
- expansion of existing efforts to monitor groundwater to maintain a good quality groundwater resource, with a focus on prevention of contamination rather than reactive clean-up programs.
- aggressive efforts to responsibly reduce air pollution in the region.



**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.** The Chamber .... We advocate for ...

- an adopted long-term General Plan for the city and county, with appropriate ongoing updates.
- an adequate supply of sites for new employers which are serviced by the infrastructure and support facilities necessary for them to thrive and that are consistent with General Plan, and the regional economic development action plan.
- removing infrastructure constraints to facilitate future development in the downtown and the core area, including issues such as inadequacy of water supply, electrical capacity, and the existence of mobility improvements.
- ensuring that planning, zoning, and land use issues remain local decisions with little to no regional, state, or federal interference.
- ensuring that processes important to business establishment are streamlined, efficient, and supported to ensure they do not become roadblocks to new economic activity.
- requirements that all new regulations and/or fees be reviewed to ensure that costs are outweighed by measurable benefits.

**COMMUNITY SAFETY.** The Chamber supports collaborative, solution-oriented efforts to deal with crime, violence, and property damage, and believes that business leaders need to take more of a leadership role in these efforts. We advocate for ...

- collaborative, community-wide efforts that address violence, with increased participation by business leaders.
- efforts aimed at graffiti suppression and prevention programs in the business parks, downtown, and other commercial districts.
- coordinated community-wide efforts to address homeless problem, with a particular emphasis on impacts to business (e.g. vandalism, cleanliness of property, etc.)

**CULTURE, ARTS, & RECREATION.** The Chamber believes that arts and cultural activities are important elements in business attraction and retention. We advocate for ...

- coordinated efforts by local and regional visitor and arts organizations to expand and enhance cultural assets in the community and to promote visits to the community and surrounding region.



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.** The Chamber endorses an Economic Development Action Plan that emphasizes increasing the number of wealth-producing jobs in the community and the expansion of the number of businesses and residents paying taxes and fees into the system. We advocate for ...

- the recruitment of new businesses, the creation of new businesses, and the encouragement of existing business expansion.
- Work with partner organizations to advocate for workforce housing and flexible zoning.
- a strategy to aggressively promote the Shadelands Business Park and other sites for job-creating business locations.

**EDUCATION.** The Chamber endorses strategies that develop local talent and keep that talent local. We advocate for ...

- efforts to develop a wide range of educational options for the business community, including classes, workshops, incubators, and e-centers; pilot programs such as the Building Industry & Community Services (BICS) program at DVC and CSUEB which develop alternative models for instructional delivery designed specifically to meet employer needs with regard to rigor, specificity, and timeliness should be encouraged and supported.
- opportunities to complete four-year college degrees and certificate programs within our community.
- programs, including career and technical education and internships, that provide a foundation for local businesses to hire students and meet future workforce demands.
- increased educational support for entrepreneurial activities and for business start-ups.

**EMPLOYMENT & LABOR.** The Chamber believes that job creation and job preparation should be the core focus of all community leaders. We also believe in balancing the rights of employees with employers' rights to operate their business successfully. We advocate for ...

- revisions to restrictive wage/hour laws and regulations that prevent mutually agreed upon flexible work weeks or other alternative schedules.
- efforts to reduce workers' compensation costs.



**GOVERNANCE & TAXES.** The Chamber believes that government agencies should perform their roles with as minimal an impact on business as possible. We advocate for ...

- streamlining of oversight agencies and protocols to simplify and avoid duplication and/or inconsistent regulations.
- requirements for cost-benefit analysis ensuring economic impacts are weighed before imposition of new cost mandates on employers.
- regular review of government-imposed impact fees to ensure that fees reflect current and accurate costs, needed projects, and accurate growth projections, with a goal of ensuring new development pays its fair share of infrastructure costs while preventing fees from becoming impediments to economic growth.
- increased emphasis on maintenance and upkeep of community assets such as roads, buildings, etc. ; long-term maintenance costs should be built into the planning of new projects, ensuring that long-term maintenance funding is available when needed.
- processes which actively seek as much input as possible from impacted stakeholders prior to making decisions regarding fees or regulations.
- ensuring that taxes and fees are broad-based and not targeted at specific industries or businesses.

**HEALTH CARE.** The Chamber believes a healthy community is a productive and profitable community, but that efforts to ensure healthy citizens should respect the rights of business owners to operate their business successfully. We advocate for ...

- legislation that leads to reforms in tort and malpractice law.
- business and community support for initiatives that will increase the quality and quantity of providers in our community, improve and expand local medical education/training programs, and to reverse the significant economic leakage of health care dollars from our community.

**INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORTATION.** The Chamber believes that an appropriate role for government is to ensure that infrastructure investments meet the needs of commuters and commerce. We advocate for ...

- appropriate investments (Measure X, Measure O, local resources, grants, etc.) in road and rail systems to better expand and improve commute and commerce corridors.
- appropriate impact fees developed based on real-world costs, and appropriate, adopted growth projections.
- timely and appropriate investments in infrastructure such that these elements do not become barriers to businesses operating successfully.