

A word from our CEO



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Strategic Planning—The new Chamber Way

Every year, the turning of the calendar brings new energy to the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce. Each January, the Chamber welcomes a new Board Chair to lead the Board of Directors. This year is no different, with Shawn Henley of Morgan Stanley taking over from Jill Buck, Executive Director of the Go Green Initiative. Shawn inherits a Board with six new Board members from organizations such as Workday, VIP Audio/Visual, Stanford Health Care Tri-Valley and Merchant Advocate, along with a Doctor of Chiropractic and a retired former City Council member. They join an experienced Board that spent 2023 building the first three-year Strategic Plan in the Chamber's history.

The new Strategic Plan, which covers 2024 through 2026, builds on past Chamber work by creating three priority "pillars" on which to focus: Membership, Advocacy, and Governance. There are 39 work goals that will be incorporated into an already-busy Chamber calendar. Achieving these goals will give members a stronger mix of benefits while sharpening our advocacy efforts and ensuring our organization operates at the highest level of professionalism.

These changes represent a new way for this Chamber to approach planning going forward. In the past, the organization has used a five-year "community vision" approach that included key economic development and community priorities to guide our planning. While it served its purpose well, the pandemic laid bare some of the inherent weaknesses of this approach. Topics of importance can change fast. One example of where this was a concern was on water, which is not even mentioned in the 2025 Community Vision document yet has been our constant focus since I arrived in mid-2022.

Going forward, instead of a Community Vision, the Chamber will create a "public policy agenda" that is reconfirmed each year by the incoming Board of Directors. This will take the best elements of the Community Vision document and incorporate them into a process that is regularly updated so our priorities match those of our community and members every year. And this is but the first step. Strategic Planning opens many doors, which is why an organization needs time to ensure it can meet each of its strategic goals. It is highly likely that not every goal will be realized, in part because we will identify other options to accomplish a similar result. But the plan lays a clear course we can follow and includes a set of metrics by which we can measure our success. It is the template for what the Chamber's planning will look like for years to come and the new "Chamber way."