

2025 STRATEGIC PLAN



OUR MISSION

To champion our communities' economic and cultural vitality through education, advocacy and networking.

2030 VISION

The Charles River Regional Chamber is a trusted and dependable resource, convener, and advocate for addressing the regional and local economic, cultural and environmental opportunities and challenges of our times.

EXTERNAL

**Regional presence,
local touch.**

Advocacy and engagement
is micro and macro.

**Evolving workplaces
and workforce.**

What, where and who our
businesses need to thrive

INTERNAL

**Engagement and
participation.**

Nurturing members, future
members & the community.

**Sustainable business
model.**

An internal structure that
supports the chamber's future.

Regional presence, local touch.

Advocacy and engagement is micro and macro.

Champion policy objectives at local, regional & state levels.

- Strengthen engagement and actions across core issues: Housing, transportation, climate, childcare & workforce development, and DEI.
- Grow reputation and impact as voice of inner suburbs through strategic partnerships and leadership in regional and statewide policy conversations and media presence.
- Position the chamber as a critical, trusted business voice to bridge polarization.

Expand community-focused initiatives in our communities.

- Expand town specific programming along the lines of Harvest Fair, Needham and Wellesley Nights into Watertown and Newton.
- Expanded issue and candidate debates/forums/education

Evolving workplaces and workforce.

What, where and who our businesses need to thrive

Help businesses adapt to evolving workplaces.

- Help our employers and communities adapt to shifts in commercial real estate uses and needs and priorities of top employers, core industries, and property owners
- Deliver programs, resources and advocacy around regulatory/policy changes, technology shifts and climate

Support workforce attraction and retention through targeted resources and advocacy.

- Become a trusted resource and voice to help employers address workforce challenges such as retiring boomers, young workers leaving the region, affordability/childcare/infrastructure, and immigrant workers.

Deepen understanding of large employer and stakeholder needs.

- Facilitate high-level connections and conversations. Create opportunities for engagement with C-suite leaders through roundtables and forums focused on key workforce and business issues.

Continue to dedicate resources and support to small businesses and nonprofits.

Engagement and participation.

Nurturing members, future members & the community.

Membership growth remains a pillar to success.

- Retain position as a top-5 Massachusetts chamber
- Explore freemium membership for specific segments, possibly retail, restaurants, and all-volunteer nonprofits.
- Deeper engagement with larger employers and non-event participant members,
- Explore mission-aligned partnerships beyond our borders, as well as multi-chamber events and collaborations to amplify our value and reach.
- Actively prioritize diverse representation/participation in programs, committees, and volunteer opportunities.
- Remain open to expansion opportunities.

Find new ways to highlight our value and tell our story.

- Engage outside help understand how the chamber is perceived and paths to telling our story/building our reputation.
- Use social media and testimonials to spotlight diverse member experiences, including non-networkers
- Establish more recognition moments of volunteers, long-time members.

Sustainable business model.

An internal structure that supports the chamber's future.

Operational efficiency while maintaining agility.

- Annually evaluate programming for mission alignment, impact, staff time, and revenue; adapt offerings as needed (e.g., transitioning from Golf to Women's Conference.)
- Integrate AI and automation tools to streamline operations, drive growth, align priorities and free up staff time for more sophisticated tasks.
- Reimagine website by 2026 to include advocacy focus, clearer storytelling and a streamlined user experience.

Diversify and strengthen revenue streams.

- Expand smaller sponsorship opportunities targeting community-focused businesses.
- Engage help to attract larger brand sponsorships.
- Explore "add-on" services to base memberships, such as advocacy support.
- Establish a 501(c)(3) foundation to unlock access to grants and fundraising for advocacy and economic development initiatives.

Lay a strong foundation for long-term success.

- Develop succession plan for board and staff leadership.
- Invest in expanded professional development opportunities to support staff growth and expertise.
- Establish and/or engage HR function

IN PROGRESS/ONGOING	PRIORITIES	NEED OUTSIDE HELP/FURTHER WORK
<p>Annual events review</p> <p>Membership growth & retention</p> <p>Expanded town specific advocacy/events</p> <p>Strengthen focus on core advocacy issues</p> <p>Smaller sponsorship opportunities</p> <p>Diverse engagement, expanded volunteer opportunities</p> <p>Small business champion</p> <p>Succession Plan/ Staff Development</p>	<p>Engage C-Suite</p> <p>Explore membership changes - 'add ons' and freemium</p> <p>501c3 Foundation</p> <p>Expand recognition moments</p> <p>Expand use of AI & Automation</p>	<p>Understand chamber perception and opportunities for storytelling</p> <p>Attract larger brand sponsorships</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Formalize HR role/engage consultant</p>

Strategic Focus – Year One (2025)

- Address operational deficits incl. HR Function, Succession Plan, filling open positions
- Continue to strengthen advocacy & programming on core issues
- Expand micro-engagement within core communities
- Explore opportunities to diversify revenue streams
- Groundwork for 501c3 Foundation
- Large employer and stakeholder engagement strategy

Year Two-Three (2026-7)

- Greater engagement from larger employers and stakeholders
- Implement new fundraising tools (membership add-ons, 501c fundraising, etc)
- Messaging strategy to include website re-development
- Evaluate opportunities for broader partnerships/growth/geographic expansion

Years Three-Five (2028-30)

- Stress test revenue model and develop alternative to membership dues
- Continue to strengthen advocacy – re-evaluate core focus areas (gauge impact and focus goals)
- What would the chamber be in 2030?

