



STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2020

FINAL – April 2018

Our Vision Statement

Our **vision** is to make Glenwood Springs the ideal mountain community.

Our Mission Statement

The **mission statement** of the GSCRA is to provide leadership, promote commerce, encourage measured growth and continue to support endeavors which will enrich the quality of life in our community.

Strengths & Opportunities for the Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association

STRENGTHS

- **Education** - Glenwood Springs is home to Colorado Mountain College, which offers a full range of learning opportunities including Bachelor's Degrees in Business Administration and Sustainability Studies. Glenwood Springs is served by the Roaring Fork School District RE-1 and various private K-12 schools.
- **Health Care** – Glenwood Springs is home to world-class medical facilities including the award-winning Valley View Hospital, a Plantree designated patient-centered hospital; Glenwood Medical Associates, a doctor-owned independent community clinic and Mountain Family Health Center which provides care to all regardless of insurance status.
- **State-of-the-Art Infrastructure** - The Grand Avenue Bridge (GAB) Project in Glenwood Springs is functionally complete and aesthetic detailing will be complete in early summer of 2018. This \$125 million GAB project is the largest infrastructure project on the Western Slope in 25 years.
- **Quality of Life, Culture & Amenities** – With a temperate climate, healthy lifestyle, world-class medical facilities, vibrant arts scene, good schools, a local college, excellent shopping and attractions as big as the great outdoors, Glenwood Springs is an ideal place to live, work and raise a family.
- **World Class Destination** – Located at the confluence of the Colorado and Roaring Fork Rivers, the historic resort town of Glenwood Springs is famous for the Glenwood Hot Springs Pool, Iron Mountain Hot Springs, Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park, Glenwood Canyon, Hanging Lake, Yampah Vapor Caves and Sunlight Mountain Resort.
- **Healthy Lifestyle** - Garfield County named Colorado's healthiest community by Governor Hickenlooper in 2017.

- **Transit** – Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) provides commuter bus service from Aspen to Glenwood Springs (Roaring Fork Valley), Glenwood to Rifle (Hogback), intra city service in Aspen and Glenwood Springs.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Housing Diversity** – Affordable housing is the greatest concern to support workforce needs, but a mix of housing is needed to appeal to different audiences. Housing inventory is low, and Glenwood Springs is constrained by geographic boundaries and faces land use challenges as we deal with traffic and population growth.
- **Workforce** – Labor supply and retention are a challenge for businesses in our community, which is exacerbated by the high cost and low availability of housing.
- **Transportation/Mobility** – Glenwood Springs is situated in a narrow valley. Connectivity throughout the community is essential for traffic flow and safety. Due to the high cost of living and limited supply of housing, more and more workforce is commuting from more affordable communities to the west. Continual growth in the area also stresses the infrastructure for roads and bridges. There is a need for increased public transit, especially to communities west of Glenwood Springs to be able to attract and retain workforce.
- **Healthcare Costs** – Residents in our community are paying some of the nation’s highest health insurance premiums in the country. This is a burden to employers who provide insurance benefits and a barrier for attracting and retaining new businesses.
- **Downtown Vibrancy** – There is a need to keep the downtown vitalized, robust and attractive to visitors and locals. Opportunities to connect the Confluence and 6th Street and to develop venues that drive traffic to the downtown area need to be supported.
- **Promote Glenwood Springs** – Continue to market Glenwood Springs as a tourism destination. Maintain a strong brand and messaging. To remain competitive, there is a need to create new venues that add to the positive experience that already exists as well as focus on the visual appeal of the main corridor though to south of town.
- **Sustainable Growth and Diversification** – Glenwood Springs is heavily dependent on tourism, and it’s important to develop a strong local economy year-round. Support to attract new employers that could provide higher paying jobs, location neutral workers and help existing businesses to expand.

THESE CHALLENGES ARE NOT UNSURMOUNTABLE.

The Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association Strategic Plan for 2018-2020 provides a blueprint to leverage our strengths and capitalize on the opportunities ahead of us. The GSCRA leadership and staff have been tasked with facilitating and accomplishing the goals outlined in this plan.

Where We're Going

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

Our priorities will focus on the following:

- **Be the Champion for a Thriving Community**
- **Be the Catalyst for Business Growth and Development**
- **Be the Convener of Leaders and Influencers to Get Things Done**

How We Are Going to Get There

PRIORITY AREA: BE THE CHAMPION FOR A THRIVING COMMUNITY

Make Glenwood Springs an even better place to live and visit. Promote Glenwood Springs by maintaining visibility, promoting its unique assets and creating venues to attract visitors and locals.

Barriers: Business hours; downtown accessibility and shortage of parking; shortage of funding to maintain new and improved infrastructure; outside influences such as fire, economics and weather; transportation and accessibility; online and social communications breakdown; increased use of online retail vs. local stores.

Objective A: Improve downtown vibrancy.

Strategy 1: Help the City keep downtown safe and clean.

Tactic: Establish a taskforce or work with Community on the Move to explore alternative funding mechanisms (outside of the existing Tourism Promotion Fund) for maintenance and security.

Strategy 2: Encourage business owners to extend hours.

Tactic: Look at examples of other communities such as Jackson Hole, which implemented a promotion for staying open later one night per week. (<https://www.jacksonholechamber.com/great-until-late/>)

Tactic: Work with the City and other partners on exploring opportunities such as an “Entertainment District” that would attract visitors and residents downtown, thereby providing a reason for shops to stay open later.

Strategy 3: Support initiatives to connect downtown, the Confluence and 6th.

Tactic: Continue to participate in the Glenwood Springs Moving Forward Together Project – the U.S. EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Effort. (<http://www.ci.glenwood-springs.co.us/422/Moving-Forward-Together>) **Tactic:** Continue to participate in conversations with various stakeholders regarding parking shortage issues, especially as other areas such as 6th St. and the Confluence are developed.

Strategy 4: Drive traffic to downtown.

Tactic: Continue to offer existing events such as Strawberry Days and Glen-A-Palooza.

Tactic: Explore new opportunities to promote downtown businesses.

Objective B: Promote Glenwood Springs as a tourism destination.

Strategy 1: Increase funding for tourism promotion.

Tactic: Maintain cohesiveness with city Government.

Tactic: Explore opportunities to increase existing Tourism Promotion Fund.

Tactic: Explore opportunities for additional funding sources.

Tactic: Execute the current 5-year professional services agreement with the City.

Strategy 2: Effectively market Glenwood Springs’ to targeted audiences.

Tactic: Use focus groups to review and refine marketing messages.

Tactic: Develop split-test campaigns to determine more effective messaging.

Tactic: Continue to use a multi-pronged marketing approach.

Strategy 3: Draw locals to downtown.

Tactic: Continue to offer existing events such as Strawberry Days and promote events such as Glen-A-Palooza.

Tactic: Work with local businesses to improve the visual appeal of the main 82 corridor from the bridge to south of town (also ties to outside visitors).

Objective C: Develop Glenwood Springs for future stakeholders.

Strategy 1: Anticipate and drive positive change.

Tactic: Create focused industry groups (i.e. insurance, HR, etc.) to discuss trends and how to address them.

Tactic: Showcase companies that are leveraging trends successfully.

Tactic: Feature experts/speakers at an Economic Outlook event.

Strategy 2: Design opportunities for the next generation to engage.

Tactic: Offer a new entry-level membership for Young Professionals to get them engaged in the chamber.

Tactic: Create events that attract younger generations.

Tactic: maybe this is where “college town” concept comes in?

PRIORITY AREA: BE THE CATALYST FOR BUSINESS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Help small businesses thrive by providing access to networking, visibility, education and other resources.

Barriers: Diverse needs of businesses; limited resources; constraints; lack of awareness; lack of engagement.

Objective A: Membership represents our diverse community.

Strategy 1: Have a “seat at the table!”

Tactic: Consider offering an “entry level” or more affordable membership for sole proprietors, young professionals, etc.

Tactic: Conduct outreach to Hispanic-owned businesses and invite them to join.

Tactic: Showcase the diversity on the board of directors.

Strategy 2: Celebrate the diversity of the Chamber.

Tactic: Create “I AM the Glenwood Springs Chamber” campaign (member spotlights showcasing diversity (age, business type, location, size, etc.) (See samples: <http://www.iamthechamber.com/>, <http://www.chipleypaper.com/news/20171212/im-in-holmes-chamber-launches-campaign-to-boost-membership-unify-businesses>)

Objective B: Offer benefits that align with business needs.

Strategy 1: Know Our Members

Tactic: Conduct surveys, polls and focus groups to determine business needs

Tactic: Ask members for feedback on benefits and suggestions to better meet their needs.

Strategy 2: Create awareness of what the Chamber offers.

Tactic: Create a “Do You Know” campaign to educate members about their benefits.

Tactic: Collect and use testimonials from members on the benefits they value and why.

Tactic: Utilize member advocates to reach out on behalf of the chamber.

Tactic: Outreach, engagement plans, ambassadors and ROI scorecards.

Strategy 3: Be the essential source for connections.

Tactic: Women Interacting and Networking.

Tactic: Leads Groups.

Tactic: Ambassadors.

Tactic: Board of Directors

Tactic: Chamber staff professional development

Objective C: Communicate the Value of Membership.

Strategy 1: Member success stories

Tactic: Image campaign on YouTube, Millennial Clips, Facebook Live.

Tactic: Collect and use testimonials from members on the benefits they value and why.

Tactic: Create “I AM the Glenwood Springs Chamber” campaign (member spotlights showcasing diversity (age, business type, location, size, etc.) (See samples: <http://www.iamthechamber.com/>, <http://www.chipleypaper.com/news/20171212/im-in-holmes-chamber-launches-campaign-to-boost-membership-unify-businesses>)

Strategy 2: Tell our story.

Tactic: Submit articles and opt-eds in the Post Independent and other mountain/regional papers (to also drive tourism/interest in GWS from outside GWS)

Tactic: Give presentations to civic organizations.

Tactic: Publish our strategic plan on our website.

Tactic: Communicate the role of the Chamber, our priorities and accomplishments.

Tactic: Leverage the credibility of our board members to speak on behalf of the Chamber.

Tactic: Enhance use of social media portals and means to communicate/promote....

PRIORITY AREA: BE THE CONVENER OF LEADERS AND INFLUENCERS TO GET THINGS DONE

Facilitate sustainable community/economic development by being the voice of small and large businesses and our community.

Barriers: Varying or conflicting public opinion; Local, state and federal government regulations; geographic constraints; different and competing business needs; lack of workers; high cost of living; lack of funding; lack of transportation; high cost of health insurance.

Objective A: Create a pipeline of employees to fill Glenwood Springs jobs.

Strategy 1: Determine the needs and gaps employers are facing.

Tactic: Establish a workforce advisory group made up of a variety of employers and CMC representatives to determine employment gaps.

Tactic: Conduct polls with Glenwood Springs employers to identify seasonal, part-time and full-time needs.

Strategy 2: Connect employers to workforce resources in the area.

Tactic: Take inventory of workforce resources available (CMC, Workforce Center, High School, Temp Agencies, YouthEntity, etc.)

Tactic: Convene meetings with the various entities to determine existing resources and how they might be better utilized or connected.

Tactic: Educate employers about workforce resources and provide a resource list on the website.

Strategy 3: Facilitate industry-education partnerships around workforce initiatives.

Tactic: Work with Colorado Mountain College and other educational institutions to align certification and degree programs with employer needs.

Tactic: Partner (with?) to provide online training solutions for employers/employees.

Tactic: Seek opportunities for Glenwood Springs employers to partner with the Roaring Fork and Garfield school districts for part-time and seasonal work opportunities (e.g., internships, career-ready curriculum, career day, job fair).

Tactic: Convene leaders and influencers to analyze workforce gaps, expand upon and connect already existing resources and create a plan of action to create a pipeline of employees to fill jobs now and in the future.

Objective B: Support affordable housing options and easier access to work.

Strategy: Determine housing needs and gaps facing employees.

Tactic: Convene a group of experts (i.e. realtors, housing authority, school district, CMC, hospital, banks, etc.) to discuss types/cost of housing and needs/gaps facing employees.

Tactic: Collect feedback from Glenwood Springs employees and the community on concerns and ideas to provide affordable housing and mobility options. (See Billings Chamber idea: <https://www.billingschamber.com/chamber-listens/>)

Strategy: Explore viable options for affordable housing and transportation.

Tactic: Convene a group of experts (i.e. realtors, housing authority, school district, CMC, hospital, banks, etc.) to discuss types/cost of housing and needs/gaps facing employees.

Tactic: Collect feedback from Glenwood Springs employees and the community on concerns and ideas to provide affordable housing and mobility options. (See Billings Chamber idea: <https://www.billingschamber.com/chamber-listens/>)

Tactic: Create a taskforce to review feedback and ideas, and to propose options for further exploration and support (includes experts, employers).

Strategy: Educate and advocate for issues/solutions regarding housing and transportation.

Tactic: Contact local and county policymakers and agency decision makers to discuss housing and transportation issues and gain their support for initiatives.

Tactic: Provide relevant information and updates to Glenwood Springs members and employers.

Tactic: Take action to support housing and transportation initiatives (e.g., encourage people to testify at City Council meetings, opt-ed commentary in the media, encourage residents to come out and vote).

Objective C: Serve as the voice of the greater Glenwood Springs business community on local, state and national issues as identified by the Business Advocacy Advisory Board (BAAB).

Strategy: Educate and inform the business community about important issues.

Tactic: Continue to host Issues and Answers forum (usually annually), providing voters the opportunity to see candidates or issue representatives in person, ask questions and listen.

Tactic: Continue to host events such as “Up Close and Personal with Your Legislators” to provide the business community an opportunity to engage with elected officials.

Strategy: Be the conduit between the business community and elected officials.

Tactic: Share the GSCRA Legislative Agenda with elected officials and employers so they understand issues that are important to Glenwood Springs businesses. (<https://glenwoodchamber.com/political-advocacy/2018-legislative-agenda/>)

Tactic: Educate and communicate business issues with local and state officials.

Tactic: Develop relationships with elected officials and invite them to attend meetings and programs.

Tactic: Utilize the Legislative Agenda as a basis for writing or signing on to letters as needed. (<https://glenwoodchamber.com/political-advocacy/2018-legislative-agenda/>)

Tactic: Lead efforts to support local special districts from the negative effects of the Gallagher Amendment.

Summary

To be successful, we need leadership as well as involvement from a broad base of community leaders. The Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association will provide the staffing and overall management of this plan, but the execution of these priority goals and the opportunity to succeed rests with leaders who will be the ambassadors of Glenwood Springs.

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 leadership to make it happen.