

### **How Our Values Shape Our Advocacy Areas of Focus**

The St. Paul Area Chamber leverages the collective voice of employers on behalf of sustained improvement in economic vitality for all, and business success in particular, across the region.

**The Chamber's commitment to our members is to ensure that business voices are heard** in a broad array of policy issue debates at all levels of government. We actively cultivate relationships with elected officials, providing them with accurate and trustworthy information, advancing our initiatives, and sharing the employer perspective on policy considerations. We are a legitimately non-partisan organization and conduct our interactions to reinforce that position. Relationships at all levels of government are not just a priority, they are critical to our work.

Diversity of thought, culture, personal identity, lived experience, and perspective are needed to create a truly vibrant and globally competitive region. The St. Paul Area Chamber promotes diversity and practices inclusion in our advocacy work. We champion equal access and equitable opportunity to close gaps resulting from racial and other systemic bias-based barriers. The future of our economy depends on how we address equity and inclusion today.

*We believe in giving businesses the tools they need* to tackle challenges in a way that works for them, for their employees, and their customers. We believe in public policies that preserve the rights of private employers, and give business the predictability necessary to encourage innovation, creative disruption, and imaginative solutions to challenges. We believe in market-based solutions to problems.

*We believe in frank dialogue and early engagement*, and that the public, private, and charitable sectors all have a role in building a prosperous region. We commit to working together and strive for a division of duties and respect for expertise that rewards what is working and avoids duplication of efforts.

*We believe that community livability is an ongoing priority.* A thriving region requires that businesses and residents alike do well. We pledge to do our part and support our public sector partners in their delivery of essential services, such as public safety and infrastructure. The growth of our economy relies on the improvement of both. Support for our government partners also means encouraging the kind of land use and growth of the tax base that pays for the services that only government can or should provide.

*We believe in the regionality of our economy.* We acknowledge the differences between and respect individual municipalities and commit to work together to create an environment which cultivates growth at a regional level and doesn't stop at city borders.

## Business Climate and Competitiveness

The best contributor to a strong economy is a healthy business climate. The Chamber advances public policy that supports the rights of private employers to make decisions based on what is important to their employees, their customers, and their stakeholders. The Chamber encourages our public sector partners to engage in truly participatory planning and encourages participation by and/or representation for businesses at decision-making tables.

Areas of Focus:

- Land use: diversified tax base, preservation of industrial land, transit-oriented development
- Access to opportunities for minority- and women-owned businesses.
- Policies that support innovation, including “soft touch” regulations for emerging markets and industries, and those that incent investment in tech and innovation sector companies.
- Community livability

## Infrastructure

High quality development and reliable infrastructure are central to economic growth. Investment in infrastructure (including roads, bridges, working river, transit, energy grid, telecommunications systems and broadband) is an economic imperative if the Twin Cities metro is to remain competitive with peer regions.

Areas of Focus:

- Transit projects that improve connectivity throughout the region, as well as equitable access to additional jobs and housing options that mobility affords
- Sustainable, predictable, and comprehensive funding mechanisms for infrastructure.

## Talent Supply and Development

Access to a diverse, skilled Workforce is an essential tool for business growth. The Chamber supports public policies that prioritize efforts to help employers attract and retain employees, while also allowing employers the flexibility to meet the needs of their companies and employees.

Areas of Focus:

- Resources and connections for students and workers looking for new career opportunities
- Immigration policies to support the attraction of professionals to our market
- Diverse, attainable housing to meet future demand
- Commonsense economic supports that meet workforce needs and promote economic growth for individuals and families

Adopted by St. Paul Area Chamber Board of Directors, November 16, 2021