In 2013, Chamber leadership set-out to create an economic development strategy to fit our unique St. Pete environment. We did not see our city’s scale or size to limit us, but rather as the unique advantage to ensure we approach our efforts through consensus and collaboration. 2019 wraps-up the final year of our strategic plan focused on the 3 key areas - inclusive economic development, advocacy and organizational leadership. Our Chamber organizations are key contributors to the momentum and success of today’s St. Pete. While we have much work to do, the collaborative nature of our approach has given our entire market a competitive advantage for those seeking a market with opportunities, diversity and access. Our last year successes included:

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- Grow Smarter welcomed over 210 attendees to the 3rd Annual Grow Smarter Summit in December 2019, hosted at the Center for Health Equity. Almost 75% of respondents were attending the summit for the first time. The expo session included 24 organizations representing Grow Smarter’s focus areas.
- Celebrated over 70 member businesses directly through community celebration ribbon cutting events.
- The St. Pete Store and Visitors Center (with the help of 20 volunteers) welcomed 16,717 visitors, sold over $103,000 of works for 75 local artists, shipped 80,000 St. Pete Visitors Guides throughout the world, and implemented a new marketing strategy.
- The St. Pete Greenhouse reached engagement of 8,500+ clients through services and events, introduced 2 new signature programs including the first third-party accredited curriculum course that offers 3 CEUS and impacted 270 students, and launched the Small Business Navigator Program to help identify and address local business needs.

**ADVOCACY**

- Showcased our community at the first “St. Pete Day in Tallahassee”, presented by Lewis, Longman, Walker, with over 50 members and community leaders while enjoying local music, craft beer, and artistry in the Capitol Courtyard.
- Succeeded in garnering “Branch Campus” designation for USF St. Petersburg under Consolidation ensuring local control of budgets and programming.
- Established a Housing, Land Use, and Development (HLUD) Committee and developed an Affordable Housing Plan focused on dedicated funding for housing programs and zoning changes to allow for increased density.

**ORGANIZATION**

- Celebrated 50 years of Leadership St. Pete with 40 new graduates of the program, while raising more than $95,000 in cash and in-kind donations for the year’s class project – Academy Prep.
- Engaged over 100 St. Pete Young Professionals in advocacy and leadership programs as they gave back by contributing over 300 service hours to programs including the St. Pete Free Clinic, CASA, PARC, The Kind Mouse, Pet Pal Animal Shelter and St. Pete Pride.
- Connected members monthly with member appreciation events, Rays, Rowdies, Lightning and Buccaneers events, the annual Good ’Burger awards party, Chamber Shuffle, and our annual Thinking Outside the ‘Burg benchmarking trip (Minneapolis/St. Paul).
We’ve learned a lot about our membership, our economy, and our community. Now it’s time to build on our successes and focus on what’s next. Our 2020 Strategic Prospectus outlines the work we will pursue our work moving forward. We believe the Chamber NEXT Leadership Objectives and strategic priorities included will require a 5-year cycle to execute – so we ask you to be curious, get engaged, and work with us on shaping our future together.

OUR MISSION
The St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce shall be the preeminent leader of business in order to ensure the economic growth and vitality of our community.

OUR VALUES

BRAND PROMISE
We offer every member the sense of belonging to our city and to the business community. We believe that, by coming together, our members will ensure the continued prosperity and vitality of St. Petersburg.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
The Committee’s final assignment was to deliver a set of strategic planning priorities for 2020 and beyond. These priorities, our objectives and the strategic considerations provide the direction needed to craft annual work plans and to monitor our course, pace and effectiveness.

1. Strengthen our business support programs to deliver new and existing services to members, high-growth enterprises and other targeted stakeholders. Our partnerships with the Greenhouse and Grow Smarter will be intrinsic to implementing this strategy.

2. Create jobs by attracting new businesses and retaining/expanding existing businesses. The bulk of these activities will be executed through the EDC and other partnerships.

3. Develop and execute, together with other organizations and institutions, a robust talent attraction plan.

4. Provide community support services through the Grow Smarter backbone and other collaborative initiatives.

5. Expand the programs and services directed at the emerging business/entrepreneurial community to support their growth and success.

6. Implement appropriate diversity/equity/inclusion initiatives within the Chamber and support such efforts by our members and the community.

7. Improve the effectiveness and focus of our advocacy efforts to better support our economic development and community support goals.

8. Develop organizational opportunities, sustainable funding options and operational efficiencies to deliver most effectively against our mission and objectives.

9. Develop a community of leaders imbued with a sense and understanding of the collective impact culture, willing to contribute energy, voice and resources to the economic growth of community.

CHAMBER NEXT LEADERSHIP OBJECTIVES
In 2019 the Chamber’s Board of Governors created the Chamber NEXT Committee to chart the strategic path forward. The Committee surveyed membership, reviewed themes and trends, and analyzed data to from the input received. These inputs created a set of 5 objectives and potential dashboard measures for the work ahead.

BUSINESS AND JOB GROWTH
- In all sectors
- Equity
- Wages

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND QUALITY
- Education
- Training
- Transportation

SPACE OPTIONS TO LIVE AND WORK
- Drive time
- Availability
- Affordability
- Transportation

COMMUNITY QUALITY OF LIFE
- A Funky St. Pete
- The Arts
- Education
- Inclusion
- Waterfront

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY OF THE BURG
- Economically
- Environment
- Energy
- Transportation