



# San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce

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David E. Garth, President/CEO

January 8, 2009

Mayor Dave Romero and Members of the City Council  
City of San Luis Obispo  
990 Palm Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

## **Re: Goal-setting and the budget process for 2009-11**

Dear Mayor Romero and Council Members:

The San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors respectfully submits the items below as the most important programs for the City to accomplish in the next two years. These priorities were reached following extensive committee and board discussion and evaluation. They represent long-term investments in our quality of life, which the Chamber believes is critical at a time when the City is facing economic uncertainty, declining revenues and likely state takeaways. We believe that with your leadership this current economic crisis presents an opportunity for us to move towards a true 21<sup>st</sup> century local economy.

### **1. Greater emphasis on Economic Development**

#### *Why:*

- The new economic realities make it even more critical to prioritize strengthening our city's base of revenues
- Retain and grow head of household jobs, with greater emphasis on "base level" jobs
- Send a message that we are "open for business"
- Assist the business community to navigate the current economic challenges

#### *How:*

- Update information on existing industry clusters and targeted industry groups
- Create a business incentive program to encourage primary employers that are environmentally and socially sustainable
- Develop a stronger City economic development brand in cooperation with the Chamber
- Add resources to help form new collaborative economic development relationships
- Prioritize projects in the entitlement process based on the project's potential for

immediate general economic benefit and job growth.

- Enhance data collection to better understand our business community and its needs
- Improve online presence

## **2. Downtown beautification**

*Why:*

- It is critical to our city's economic development and tourism brand
- Attracts residents and visitors to bring in needed sales tax and TOT revenues
- Enhances the image of San Luis Obispo as a unique destination
- Core to the city's sense of place and community pride

*How:*

- Redo the downtown design manual
- Develop a budget plan to finance public improvements
- Begin work in a demonstration area in the core of downtown

## **3. Become a center for sustainable business leadership**

*Why:*

- Save environmental resources
- An environmentally-oriented city will enhance our economic development brand
- Attract the entrepreneurial/ creative class
- Attract and nurture businesses aligned with this goal

*How:*

- Implement climate action plan that strives to have a carbon neutral city
- Improve web presence on the City's sustainability efforts and inventory local assets and resources
- Enhance bike access and bike education
- Promote clean fuel vehicles, including in the public transportation system, and use of alternative transportation

Thank you for your consideration of these suggested goals and for inviting input from the community. We look forward to participating in the Community Forum on January 15 and in the other remaining steps in the budget and goal setting process for 2009-2011.

Sincerely,



Tom Lebens

Chairperson of the Board

cc: Ken Hampian, City Manager

Bill Statler, Director of Finance and Information Technologies