




NEEDS YOUR TIME, TALENT, & TREASURE

to Catalyze Economic Growth



The world today is experiencing and characterized by a dramatic and accelerating pace of change. Technology advancements, demographic and cultural shifts, political fragmentation and partisanship, global conflict, and climate change are all contributing factors to an uncertain and increasingly competitive global economy.

El Paso, like the rest of the world, is experiencing its own localized cultural and technological shift. The city is vastly different from the one of just ten years ago, as renewed investment in the city's infrastructure promises a future of great promise and prosperity for the people of El Paso. Despite the noticeable progress, El Paso must do more. More specifically, the El Paso Chamber (EPC) must adopt and evolve to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow to help position El Paso as a community of the future and to effectively compete in the global economy.

THE CASE STATEMENT

Past

Recent social and political events have highlighted El Paso's inability to articulate and activate a common, transformational, and aspirational vision for the community's future. Fractured and inconsistent cooperation among community leaders, paired with an unspoken inferiority complex as a community, has hindered El Paso's ability to retain and attract young professional talent.

Recent decisions by El Paso City Council demonstrate the challenges before us as a community. For the last 10 years, the City has focused efforts and resources to determine the best use for the Union Plaza area (also known as Duranguito) in its Downtown. It commissioned and completed a MPC Feasibility & Programming Study in 2022 working with Gensler, a San Francisco-based design and architecture firm. However, the efforts were all for naught. What was destined in 2012 for a redevelopment approach centered around a new arena backed by a \$228.2 million bond stalled out in 2023. The remaining \$155 million of the bond is being directed toward renovating or upgrading current city facilities.

The original intent of the bond was to enhance the quality-of-life in El Paso, providing residents with much needed amenities and bring a sense of vibrancy to the downtown. Additionally, the initiative was intended to attract visitors and highlight El Paso as a world-class destination. As it stands in 2023, the El Paso County Coliseum is over 80 years old, and a replacement is needed. This spirit of the bond, voted on by citizens in 2012, should not be lost. It is important to the EPC, its members, and the future of the city to think differently about how they live, work, and connect with the city.

Present

Recent leadership changes and the lack of cohesive direction is costing taxpayer dollars—the El Paso Chamber of Commerce is uniquely positioned to be a nonpartisan trusted convener that the community needs now. With intentional focus and committed leadership, El Paso can leverage its unique assets – it's binational economy, the downtown and uptown renaissance, and growing technology sector to develop into the nation's premier border community. To do this, the Chamber must marshal resources to help the community usher in new big, bold, and innovative strategies that will foster a growth-oriented economy.

Future

With comprehensive support from El Paso's leading business community and resident changemakers, EPC will collaborate with civic and community leaders to identify and disseminate stories that help people understand and appreciate where they live and work. This storytelling campaign will galvanize community leaders, and provide the spark needed to convert a common vision into intentional and purposeful action. Further, this campaign will serve as the foundation for future EPC initiatives, such as expanding the Leadership Academy to promote solution-oriented energy in the community, attract investments and professionals to the downtown and uptown areas of El Paso, and reinvigorate constructive discussion about the proposed arena's potential location and specification.

THE NEED

As a trusted, nonprofit, and nonpartisan organization, the Chamber is uniquely positioned to serve as the convening and catalytic lead organization El Paso needs to build the framework for the future. To achieve this vision, the Chamber requires funding, resources, and capacity to act as the lead organization that will unite the business community, civic leaders, young professionals, and current and future residents of El Paso to create an action-oriented plan for downtown development. To begin this process, the EPC is looking to raise \$300,000 from private sector leaders to support this important initiative.

The Value/Impact

A Storytelling Campaign and Handbook and a Five Year Roadmap for Investment will be used to empower community leaders and emerging leaders and will provide them with the necessary tools and resources to effectively communicate the unique qualities, strengths, and opportunities in El Paso. By telling the El Paso story in a compelling way, more people will be drawn to live, work, and invest in the community, which will help drive economic growth and prosperity. With a galvanized and energized constituency of new emerging leaders, the EPC will be able to harness that inspiration and aspiration to chart the course forward and identify the key goals and strategies needed to unlock the full potential of the El Paso region. More than just words on papers, these foundational tools will enable EPC leaders to coalesce a community of entrepreneurs, business owners, thought leaders, community advocates, students, the faith community, and even former skeptics to participate in an ecosystem of ideas and energy that will propel El Paso to a more prosperous future.

El Paso has seen big wins in the past. And El Paso has celebrated its share of wins recently, including recently. Just last year, the city realized more than \$721 million in community investments in more than 200 capital improvement projects, including the Eastside Regional Command Center, Armijo Branch Library Renovations, Liz Morayma Gonzalez Park Improvements, and the arrival of the Sun Metro Montano Brio. Despite this, El Paso deserves more. It is poised for more. The El Paso Chamber is prepared to ignite the potential in this region, by engaging new and emerging leaders, compelling storytelling, charting the course with purposeful planning, and driving investment so that El Paso can reach its full potential and achieve the new big, bold, and transformational goals required for true economic growth.

THE PLAN

With appropriate funding in place, EPC is prepared to embark on an unprecedented strategic initiative to propel the community forward and position it to achieve transformational goals for economic growth. Our aim is to focus on taking the best of El Paso and working collaboratively to create spaces that are expressive, participatory, and celebratory.

EPC will work with a team of consulting partners (the project team) to participate in an intensive planning process. EPC envisions a four-phase process:



Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the current state of affairs.



Develop a comprehensive strategy and create a detailed action plan based on the results of the assessment and the storytelling campaign.



Utilize the findings to enhance and support a targeted storytelling campaign.



Conduct a site-analysis and feasibility study to reimagine a future Multi-Purpose Center in El Paso

Each of the following outlined tasks is a critical step forward in positioning El Paso as a desirable and innovative community of the future.

Assessment of the Current State of El Paso

To support these efforts, EPC proposes the following action steps:

Asset Map

The project team will develop a comprehensive asset map of the multitude of organizations, assets, programs, and resources currently available to support the growth and transformation of the El Paso region. This inventory will provide an invaluable tool for community leaders to identify opportunities to collaborate and build on existing resources.

Community Development Initiatives: Capturing common themes and identify any gaps in current efforts. This inventory provides a roadmap for leaders to better understand the needs of their community and take targeted actions to address areas in need of improvement.

Cultural Assets: Leveraging the tangible and intangible elements of El Paso's cultural heritage can create a stronger sense of the community's identity, character, and sense of place. The unique cultural heritage of El Paso plays a key role in promoting community engagement, fostering a sense of community pride, and attracting visitors.

Key Developments and Proposed Projects: Analyzing current projects and developments can clarify areas where additional investment may be needed, or where there may be opportunities for growth and development.

Economic Growth Engines: Identifying key industries and occupations will help align workforce development programs with local employer needs, enabling EPC to have a well-informed strategy to attract new businesses and talent to the area and improve the quality of life and economic opportunities for residents.

Peer Chamber Best Practices

The project team will conduct best practice research from across the country, specifically focusing on how other Chambers are cultivating leaders and enhancing regional collaboration. A few examples include:

[Detroit Homecoming](#): Through a variety of live and virtual keynote addresses, outdoor dinners, neighborhood tours, and the Dlectricity Festival, attendees experience all that Detroit has to offer. The event provides a platform for expats to build important connections with local companies, grassroots doers, investors, and nonprofits, offering a total immersion into the city's professional and cultural scene.

[TYPROS](#): TYPROS was founded in 2005 with the ambitious goal of attracting and retaining young, creative talent to Tulsa while developing the next generation of leaders and enhancing the city's sense of place. Through collaborative efforts with community and business leaders, TYPROS has become one of the nation's leading young professional's groups with a focus on diversity, inclusion, and making Tulsa a vibrant city for young professionals. At its core, TYPROS remains dedicated to improving Tulsa and the lives of young professionals who call it home.

[Now Louisville: 2020-2025 Strategic Plan](#): Recognizing that Louisville was consistently in the middle of the pack relative to their peer cities, the Greater Louisville Metro Chamber of Commerce developed the Now Louisville plan. The strategic plan serves as a roadmap that laid out fundamental initiatives to advance the region and transform the perception of Louisville. The plan is anchored by six pillars that are seen as critical to the evolution of the Greater Louisville region, including innovation, startups, clusters, talent, inclusion, and connectivity and mobility.

[Opportunity Austin](#): Opportunity Austin is a proven economic development program – but it's more than a program or campaign. Opportunity Austin is an ecosystem of ideas, initiatives and investors who share a common interest: the continued success of the Austin Texas region.

[The ATXelerator](#): The ATXelerator is an innovative and unique program that recruits and trains community leaders interested in advocating for future-focused city policy. Serving on a city board or commission, or in some instances, running for city council.

[Kansas Leadership Center](#): The Kansas Leadership Center encourages more Kansans to exercise leadership for positive community change by taking an active part in civic life. The goal of the organization is to transform civic life in Kansas and beyond by creating a culture where everyday people exercise leadership and engage others to make progress on the toughest challenges.

[The Public Service Leadership Academy](#): The Public Service Leadership Academy aspires to improve government operations and citizen services led by government leaders who are resilient in the face of challenge, capable of guiding change, driving innovation and empowering their teams to deliver results for their customer and citizens.



The El Paso Story in 2023:

EPC leaders in partnership with a project consultant team will review and analyze current EPC testimonials from members, partner organizations, and residents. This collection of testimonials will inform and drive themes and narratives to be drafted as part of the Story Telling campaign in phase two of the project.

Story Telling Campaign Strategy

Story Telling Campaign:

Utilizing the findings from the Assessment of the Current State of El Paso and the collected testimonials, EPC leaders and community stakeholders will be given the tools to develop a multi-channel, integrated story telling campaign. The campaign will be designed to energize and activate current residents of El Paso, and present a compelling and intriguing story to outsiders of the region. The campaign will include the following component parts:

Storytelling for Economic Impact Workshop #1

EPC leaders and community leaders will participate in a workshop facilitated by a team of outside consultants. The first workshop will analyze the findings from the regional assessment and help leaders begin to synthesize key themes and messaging for the El Paso Story Telling campaign.

Site Visit

The project team will coordinate a visit(s) to a peer community to learn how they've changed the narrative in their community. These site visits are a unique chance for community leaders to draw inspiration from other communities and understand best practices from across the country.

Experiential Storytelling Workshop #2

The second workshop will enable EPC leaders and community stakeholders to develop content and storytelling campaigns to be activated across all levels of the El Paso region.

Story Telling Handbook

The result of the work done to develop a storytelling campaign will be a comprehensive and action-oriented handbook. This handbook will be designed to activate storytellers and identify and arm advocates with the strategies, messaging and themes to galvanize the El Paso community. Developed for the public, private, and civic sectors, this handbook will serve as the foundation for community leaders to drive investment, reinvestment, and unlock the potential of emerging young leaders across the region.

Themes of the Storytelling Handing can include:

- » Art and Architecture
- » El Paso in Context
- » Innovation and Inspiration
- » Neighborhood and Community Development
- » Regional Assets
- » Small Business Showcase
- » Why El Paso?

Five-Year Roadmap for Investment

Complementary to the Story Telling Handbook, EPC leadership in coordination with other key community stakeholders will participate in a process to develop a Five-Year Roadmap for Investment. This roadmap will identify key goals for the EPC and outline strategies and tactics to achieve those goals. The planning process will help build a stronger sense of community, promote local businesses and organizations, increase the number of engaged and informed residents, foster collaboration and inclusion and usher in a new era of growth and energy in El Paso. This plan will serve as the cornerstone for the shared vision for El Paso's future to:

- » Retain and attract top-tier young professional talent.
- » Promote local businesses and organizations.
- » Increase the number of engaged and motivated citizens.
- » Encourage collaboration and inclusion.
- » Develop downtown and uptown El Paso

As part of the Five Year Roadmap to Investment, the project team will analyze the findings from the Gensler report and coordinate and convene local leaders to explore potential options to move forward with a potential Multi-Purpose Center in El Paso. As part of this process, community leaders, informed by grassroots community feedback, will explore potential public-private partnership options to ensure that the community vision for an multi-purpose center does not languish. EPC is particularly well positioned to coordinate these convenings, given its nonpartisan perspective and proven ability to pull together a group of diverse stakeholders and interest groups.



EL PASO CHAMBER

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE EL PASO CHAMBER

Introduction

Since 1899, the EPC has been transforming business and improving lives. With over 1,400 members, the EPC is the largest business organization in the El Paso metropolitan region and its membership represents all groups, business sizes and sectors. Held in the public trust, the EPC fosters, strengthens, and elevates business through connecting, coaching, advocating, and innovating.

- » 220,000 jobs were created across the region.
- » \$4.6 billion generated in yearly revenue.

Mission Statement

The El Paso Chamber believes that humanity's single greatest innovation for the creation of jobs, productivity gains, and community wealth is business. We support business and our community by providing opportunities for connecting, coaching, advocating, and innovating.

Aspirational Vision Statement

The El Paso Chamber will be a regional powerhouse with over 5,000 members, a voice capable of garnering national media attention with programs capable of driving economic prosperity in the community. This will include a transformational downtown development that leverages \$150 million of funding meeting the economic, cultural, and community development needs of El Paso.