

PRESIDENT & CEO'S

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



## A Note from the President & CEO

By no stretch of the imagination is it an overstatement to say that 2024 was an extraordinary year for Chamber San Mateo County. With an increased focus on policy, communication and member engagement efforts, the Chamber elevated its operations to support the second year of its expanded footprint that now encompasses 1,500 members, 175,000 residents and 100,000 employees in Redwood City, San Carlos, Menlo Park and Belmont and throughout San Mateo County.

In 2024, Chamber San Mateo County was front and center in advocacy efforts for transportation and housing efforts, and played pivotal roles in shaping tax measures in Redwood City and Belmont to protect businesses and support those communities. This was complemented with efforts to bring greater awareness to Chamber members about candidates running for office and underscoring the importance of exercising the collective voice of the business community for responsible community growth, fair economic conditions and good and responsive government.

In all, 2024 can go in the Chamber's annals as a consequential year of action and results!

### Our Purpose

We support businesses and everyone they serve to build a brighter future for San Mateo County.

### Our Promise

We are the forum where business voices are heard, engaged, supported, and elevated.

### Our Difference

The Chamber uses effective engagement, diverse perspectives, and strong leadership to be a collaborative force in San Mateo County.



# Committees Updates

Our committees have continued to meet virtually on a bi-monthly basis. Our committee members have diversified over the course of the year and have truly begun to represent a wide range of our membership. We are planning on having our Education & Workforce Committee do an in-person site visit in September. Overall, we will find the committees excel virtually, as it allows for more of our members to participate.

To bring greater visibility to their work, we introduced logos for each committee earlier this year.



The committee was re-named to include workforce, as the Chamber's goal is to have the county's educational resources aligned to ensure a strong, prepared and diverse workforce.

- Legislative updates have been received from Joan Dentler, Senior Field Representative for Senator Josh Becker; Dave Burruto, District Director for Assemblymember Diane Papan; and Elise Lester, Field Representative for Assemblymember Marc Berman.
- Local school district and college updates have been received from Cañada College President Kim Lopez; San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools Nancy Magee; Sequoia Union High School District Superintendent Crystal Leach; Redwood City School District Superintendent John Baker; Belmont-Redwood Shores School District Superintendent Dan Deguara; and San Carlos School District Superintendent Jennifer Frentress.
- Discussion and presentations have included:
  - San Carlos School District – Measure H Campaign Update and endorsement request
  - Dreams33
  - 4C's of San Mateo County Update
  - BRSSD November 2024 bond measure endorsement request
  - The Parent Venture
  - Measure U Bond Measure
  - San Mateo County Community Colleges Foundation Update
  - Cañada College - High School Counselor & Community Partners



Discussion and presentations have included:

- 2024 Regional Housing Bond & ACA 1
- 2026 Regional Transportation Bond
- California High-Speed Rail Update
- San Mateo County Transportation Authority – Regional Transit Connections Plan
- How can a Transportation Management Association Help You & Our Surrounding Cities?
- Housing Leadership Month
- SB 1031 Update
- Dumbarton West Busway Corridor Project
- Regional Transportation Ballot Measure Planning
- Prop 5 - Local Bonds for Housing & Infrastructure
- LifeMoves Programs funded by Measure K
- San Mateo County Transportation Authority:
  - 101 Corridor Connect
  - Active 101
- SR84/US101 Interchange Reimagining Project Update
- California State Housing Propositions Update

Discussion and presentations have included:

- Sequoia Station Update – Hunter Properties
- 1800 Broadway/910 Marshall Proposed Project Update – R&M Properties
- 2300 Broadway Project Update
- Stanford in Belmont Project
- Meet Redwood City, San Carlos & Belmont's Newest Economic Development Managers
- Meet Chamber Member Crown Castle and Learn about all they are doing!





- Legislative updates have been received from Mario Rendon, District Director for Congressman Kevin Mullin; Miles Goodman, Field Representative for Senator Josh Becker; Marci Dragun, Chief of Staff to SMC Supervisor Warren Slocum; Redwood City Mayor Jeff Gee; San Carlos Mayor John Dugan; Belmont Mayor Julia Mates; and Menlo Park Mayor Cecilia Taylor.
- Legislative tracking for all Chamber Members and Committee Members
- Ongoing Chamber presence at Council meetings and planning commission meetings in Redwood City, San Carlos, Belmont, Menlo Park and San Mateo County Board of Supervisors meetings.
- December's Election Wrap-Up with Mark Simon



Discussion and presentations have included:

- City of Belmont Update
- Harbor Industrial Area Annexation Update
- Stanford in Belmont Project Update
- City of Belmont Update
- City of Menlo Park & Chamber SMC - Downtown Parking Lot Development Meeting



Discussion and presentations have included:

- 2024 Program of Work
- Economic Development Update
- Parkline | Menlo Park

## San Mateo County Advocacy

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### Position Letters

- Waymo Advice Letter 0002
- 2024 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program Request for State Route 84 – Unites States 101 Interchange Reimagined
- CPPA Coalition Letter
- Joint MTC ABAG Legislation Committee - SB 1031
- City of Belmont – Business License Tax Update Agenda Item
- City of Redwood City – Agenda Item 9A
- 847 Woodside Road – Eden Housing
- Port of Redwood City's Storm/Sewage Infrastructure Improvement Project
- Joint Comments in Support of Draft Resolution TL-19150
- Support AB 2797 (McKinnor)
- City of Belmont – Opposition to Business License Tax
- City of Redwood City – Business License Tax Model Update
- Inclusion of Redwood City Ferry Service in Plan Bay Area 2050+
- Parkline Project
- SB 1432 (Caballero)
- AB 3048
- SB 1 Funding Priorities Coalition
- MTC Letter - Inclusion of Redwood City Ferry Service & Terminal Project in Plan Bay Area 2050+
- MTC Letter - San Carlos Technical Assistance Funding

## Development Projects and School Bond Endorsements

- San Carlos School District – Measure H: Education & Workforce Committee and Board of Directors ballot measure endorsement support.
- Parkline | Menlo Park: Menlo Park Business Committee and Board of Directors conditional endorsement.
- Belmont-Redwood Shores School District Bond Measure: Education & Workforce Committee and Board of Directors ballot measure endorsement support
- 1900 Broadway: Economic Development Committee & Board of Directors full endorsement support

## City of Redwood City Business License Tax

The Chamber, through its Board and staff, spent several months working to shape the outcome of the Redwood City business license tax update. In April 2024, Redwood City Council coalesced around a gross receipts tax proposal. The Chamber worked closely with the elected officials and staff to ensure that the voices of businesses were heard and the impact of such a policy was understood. In addition to broad concerns about harmful impacts of gross receipts models in general, the Chamber also drew attention to the lack of business engagement and flawed data the City was using to reach its decision. As a result of months of advocacy by the Chamber and its Redwood City members, including nearly a dozen focus group meetings with nearly 100 businesses, along with countless calls, emails and letters, Council abandoned its consideration of a gross receipts tax model. **This shift by Council was a massive win for Chamber members!**

Redwood City then went about revising its current per-employee business license tax model and increasing the cap for overall tax liabilities for businesses. Again, the Chamber went about working to refine the many iterations of the proposal that eventually made its way to Council on June 22, 2024. We argued that both the fee for certain categories (especially professional services) and the cap of \$500,000 were unreasonable and unacceptable. In particular, we reinforced that the proposal would hurt businesses, put workers at risk, and would cause a cascading effect that could impact small businesses, school districts and future economic growth in the city.

Though we were not successful in lowering the fees, through our advocacy and through the voice of our members, we were able to convince enough members of Council of the harm in rate of the cap. Council amended the proposal to lower the cap by half to \$250,000. **This was also a big win for the Chamber members!**

## City of Belmont Business License Tax

In Belmont, unlike in Redwood City, staff engaged the Chamber from the very beginning of their discussions about a transition to a gross receipts model. We, again, made our position clear in opposing the model. Through a hand-in-glove partnership with Belmont staff, the Chamber worked to engage Belmont businesses in discussions to understand impacts of a new taxing model. A key difference between the Belmont and Redwood City proposals was that Belmont's proposal was revenue-neutral, with the City attempting to modernize its taxing structure to be more equitable, while not attempting to gain any new revenue for the city. While the Chamber did not agree with the taxing model, we worked to mitigate the risk to and impact on businesses and reinforced the need for containment through Belmont's revenue-neutral approach.

In July 2024, the Belmont Council approved language for a ballot measure to send a gross receipts tax model to the voters of the city on the November 2024 ballot. **Chamber San Mateo County continues to oppose this measure.**

# Programs and Events Updates



Nearly 300 leaders from all sectors in San Mateo County convened for the 55th annual Progress Seminar in Sonoma County on April 19 – 21, 2024. **BIG KUDOS to Progress Seminar co-chairs: Rosanne Foust, Julie Lind, Mike Callagy and Dr. Jamillah Moore!**

This year's sessions and speakers provided masterclasses on topics that are impacting our community, including: strengthening democracy, philanthropy, healthcare, federal funding, artificial intelligence, and the need for strong transit systems.

The Progress Seminar also hosted candidate forums for California 16th Congressional District and San Mateo County 4th Supervisorial District.

- Sam Liccardo, former mayor of San Jose (Congressional candidate)
- Joe Simitian, Supervisor, Santa Clara County (Congressional candidate (at the time))
- Evan Low, Assemblymember, California Assembly (Congressional candidate)
- Lisa Gauthier, Councilmember, City of East Palo Alto (Supervisor candidate)
- Antonio Lopez, Mayor, City of East Palo Alto (Supervisor candidate)



The Chamber Leadership program graduated its 36th class of 56 participants on June 7, 2024, with representatives from all spectrums of the business, government, not-for-profit and education sectors. Congressman Kevin Mullin provided the keynote address at the graduation ceremony. Throughout the program, participants engaged in sessions:

- Focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion as it relates to education, business & economic development, healthcare, public safety, housing, and transportation;
- Highlighting climate resilience and sustainability initiatives such as clean energy, wildfire mitigation, and sea-level rise;
- Discussions surrounding mental health in both professional and personal realms; and
- Promoting civic engagement and community involvement through public office, Boards, commissions, and volunteer opportunities.

The 2024-2025 Leadership class is sold out and the program begun on September 13, 2024.



In 2022, we made the decision to revamp our traditional "mixers" and introduced them as engaging "Off the Clock" networking events. Since 2022, the Chamber has hosted 21 "Off the Clock" events, attended by 838 participants.



The Chamber presented their 126th annual leadership awards on February 29, 2024, at a luncheon event that celebrated an all-female slate of honorees.

**Save the Date:** 127th Annual Awards Luncheon - Thursday, February 27, 2025 at Domenico Winery



**Cornerstone Award**

Congresswoman  
Anna Eshoo



**Woman of the Year**

Julie Lind



**Board Chair's Person of the Year**

Amy Buckmaster

**Tom Mohr "Champion of Education" Awards**



Dr. Jamillah Moore



## Good Morning, San Mateo County!

Good Morning, San Mateo County! is the Chamber's public policy program that features state of the city addresses by the mayors of Redwood City, San Carlos, Belmont and Menlo Park. 2024 State of the City addresses were delivered by Redwood City Mayor Jeff Gee and Belmont Mayor Julia Mates. Also featured are the 2024 Candidate forums for the City of Redwood City, City of San Carlos, City of Belmont, City of Menlo Park and San Mateo County Supervisor District 4 Race. Links to the recorded address can be accessed [here](#).



Each fall, Chamber San Mateo County, in partnership with the San Mateo County Economic Development Association (SAMCEDA), hosts Birdies for Business golf tournament at Stanford Golf Course. This year marked the 11th anniversary of the tournament and featured 107 golfers. The tournament is a major fundraiser for the Chamber and helps fund important policy, advocacy and leadership programs.

**Save the Date:** Monday, September 22, 2025 at the Stanford Golf Course

# THURSDAY NIGHT LIGHTS



In collaboration with the City of San Carlos, Thursday Night Lights is a multi-Thursday event series designed to encourage shoppers and the San Carlos community to support the downtown retailers and restaurants. The event included extended shopping hours, special deals/sales, and holiday carolers parading around downtown.



Coffee Talks, where members come together to discuss and learn about issues that matter most. In a relaxed setting, participants can engage in meaningful conversations, share perspectives, and connect with local businesses and leaders.

Topics have included:

- Gain Traction in Q4 & Ensure your Business is Optimized with Stephanie Tsatsos, EOS
- Finding & Keeping Great Talent: 5 Key Insights with Erin Judge, TriNet

## RIBBON CUTTINGS

- ElectricFish
- Monterra Credit Union
- Hotworx Belmont
- Express Employment Professionals
- Rebarts Interiors
- Impasto
- Limón
- Elia



## CANDIDATE GUIDE

This Candidate Information Guide is a non-partisan, public information resource, produced by Chamber San Mateo County, to provide Chamber members with information about candidates running for various public offices in San Mateo County.

# Board Retreat and Strategy Development

Chamber San Mateo County's Board of Directors met for their annual retreat on January 25, 2024. Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic, this was the first board retreat since January 2020.

The purpose of the retreat was to identify priority areas of focus that will populate the Chamber's annual program of work. To inform the planning process, various stakeholder groups (Board members, city officials, Chamber members) were engaged – through online surveys – to gather feedback about Chamber services and programs, and to better understand their perceptions, perspectives and needs.

The Board established four priority areas of focus:



To implement these areas of focus, the Board also directed follow-up on three priority areas:

- Communication
- Government Relations
- Being more assertive in shaping the political landscape

## Communications Plan

Launched from the Board retreat, the Chamber CEO hired MBailey Advisors to develop and assist with implementing a communications plan. The plan consists of four goals and four strategies:

### Goals

- Move from simply communicating to fully engaging.
- Generate support and enthusiasm for Chamber members and the services they provide.
- Influence decisions and decision-makers.
- Enhance the profile of the Chamber and reinforce its value proposition.

### Strategies

- Tell the stories of Chamber members
- Tell the Chamber's story
- Inform, educate and persuade elected officials and their staffs
- Elevate the Chamber's influence

To achieve these goals, the Chamber has:

- Published its re-designed Annual Report
- Published weekly newsletters
- Launched a Member Spotlight series, which, to date, has highlighted 15 members in the Chamber's weekly newsletter
- Redesigned the Chamber website
- Published a monthly CEO letter to members
- Authored an op-ed on "Businesses are paying their fair share"
- Provided special alerts and notices regarding timely local policy issues



## Government Relations Plan

Also launched from the Board retreat, the Chamber CEO hired M Bailey Advisors to also develop and assist with implementing a government relations plan. The plan consists of four goals and six strategies:

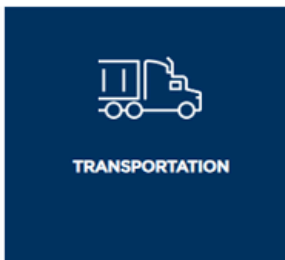
### Goals

- Know, understand and have productive relationships with elected officials and city staffs in the Chamber's service area
- Inform and influence decisions
- Identify and cultivate talent for elected and appointed office
- Create an ecosystem where the Chamber is an elected-official's go-to on business and big community issues

### Strategies

- Be present, visible, vocal and helpful
- Keep members informed and mobilize as needed
- Encourage identified talent to seek elected and appointed positions (including planning commissions, arts commissions, etc.)
- Keep officials informed and engaged (let them know who they represent and who we represent)
- Engage the Board in fostering and maintaining relationships and exerting influence
- Show up and show out – preparation, professionalism and precision

### Priorities



## Redwood City Improvement Association

We have just wrapped up our 10th year managing the day-to-operations of the Redwood City Improvement Association and it's been a very successful year for the organization including the debut of a community piano and partnering with the City of Redwood City on the upcoming Pedestrian Mall. This year, Chamber San Mateo County had 265 hours of Project Management hours. The Chamber is up for renewal on the management contract in January 2026, and the Community Benefit Improvement District expires December 2029.