

# STRATEGIC PLAN

| 2020-2025



## CHEHALIS COMMUNITY RENAISSANCE TEAM

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Approved by the CCRT Advisory Board on June 18, 2020.

# Executive Summary

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The Chehalis Community Renaissance Team (CCRT) 2020 – 2025 Strategic Plan establishes a path for making informed decisions to meet community building goals in Chehalis, Washington. The Strategic Plan identifies specific priorities, initiatives and the key action items needed to efficiently accomplish them.

This Strategic Plan identifies four priorities: rebranding CCRT, enhancing programs and services, diversifying funding sources, and cultivating civic pride. Rebranding and diversifying funding are internal areas of strategic focus where CCRT must make changes to effectively promote their work and respond to a changing market. As CCRT drives for change, the organization must not lose sight of its values and mission, which is why CCRT's other key priorities anchor on fostering community connections and elevating existing programs and services in light of the pandemic.

## **Priority 1: Rebrand CCRT**

- Create new organization name and media presence
- Communicate events, opportunities, progress of action steps

## **Priority 3: Diversify Funding Sources**

- Increase alternative revenue sources

## **Priority 2: Enhance Programs & Services**

- Establish a successful volunteer recruitment program
- Expand Façade Improvement program
- Support continued education for business owners
- Improve mobility in the downtown core

## **Priority 4: Cultivate Civic Pride**

- Nurture programs that support civic engagement opportunities
- Strengthen relationship with Chehalis Foundation

This Plan affirms CCRT's mission and values, explores the current environment and community opportunities, and recommends strategies for success. Collaboration will be vital to the success of this plan. Initiatives were developed through a community visioning process and executing them will require a community effort. CCRT intends to play a lead role in implementation, fostering partnerships and soliciting help from the community along the way.

# Introduction and Project Purpose

This Strategic Plan is an aspirational, guiding document that will inform annual goal setting, budgeting, and programmatic evaluation processes. The plan paints a picture of CCRT's desired future for the Chehalis community. Strategic initiatives for the five-year period from 2020 to 2025 focus on the actions and investments CCRT needs to make to support progress towards their key priorities.

As part of the strategic planning process, CCRT redefined their organizational values, along with their mission and their vision. This vision and the strategic initiatives that have been established to achieve it call for investments in the community that will sustain qualities that make Chehalis special. The vision contained in the following priorities describes an organization passionate about building a flourishing community with a strong character and quality of life, supported by a strong economy and quality programs and services.

Strong communities are built on resilient foundations. For CCRT, investing in those foundations can preserve city heritage and maintain the vitality of a thriving Chehalis. While the City of Chehalis and the Chehalis business community are the primary actors in this Plan, success in these initiatives will require the support of the entire extended Chehalis community.

This Plan calls for strategic investments in CCRT's internal structure, community partnerships, and downtown businesses that will both improve the quality of life for residents and make the community a more attractive place for new residents, new businesses, and visitors. This Strategic Plan builds on past accomplishments from the 2009 Renaissance Plan, addresses the needs of the current environment, and looks towards a resilient future.



# Community Vision

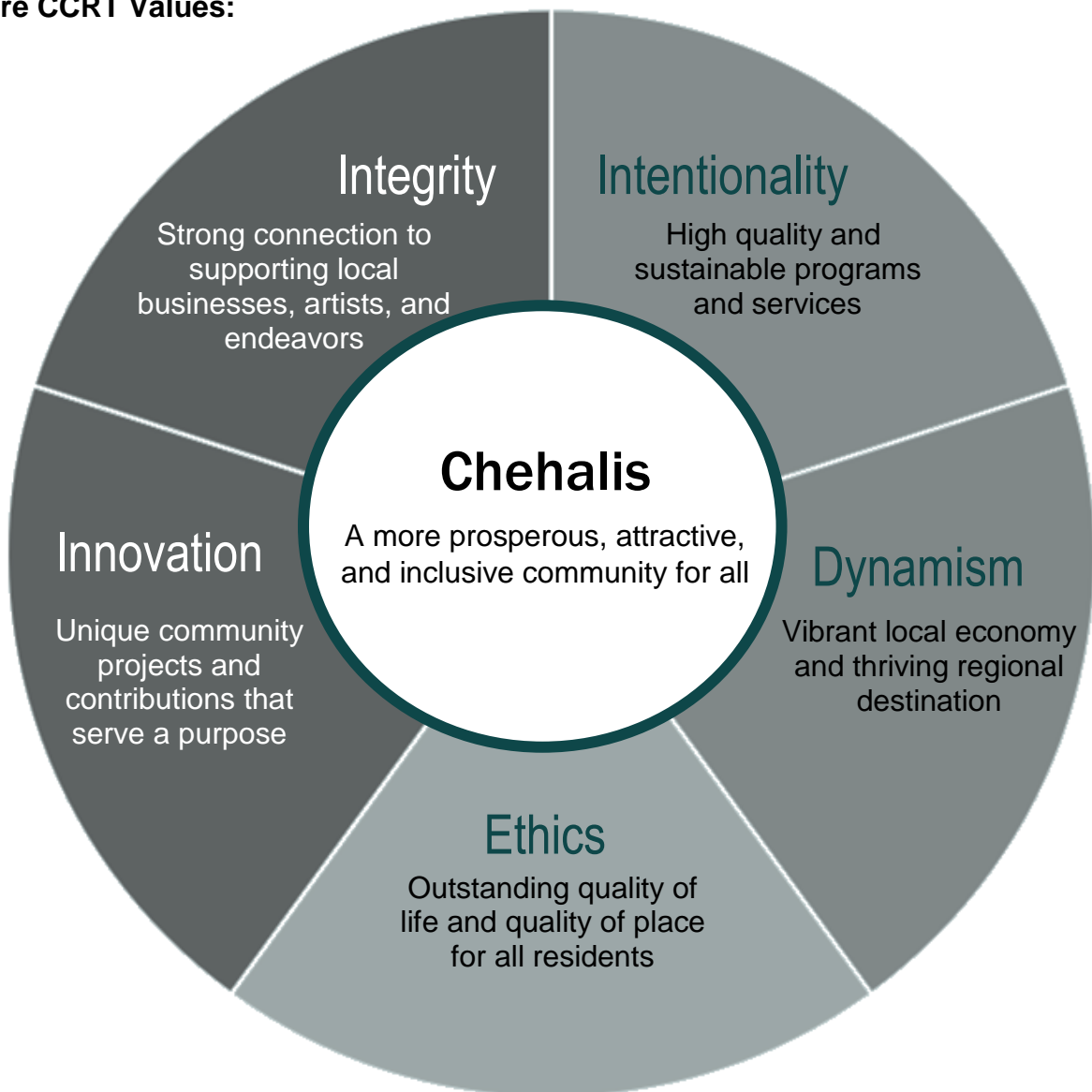
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As part of the planning process, strategic planning committee members discussed their vision for the future of CCRT and Chehalis. This community vision is described below, with some elements reflecting a preservation of existing characteristics and other elements describing investment in strengthening the community.

**CCRT Mission:** We cultivate relationships and celebrate community to deliver a more vibrant Chehalis.

**CCRT Vision:** Chehalis is a more prosperous, attractive, and inclusive community for all.

**Core CCRT Values:**





# Strategic Priorities and Initiatives

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Four priorities have been identified as important steps to operationalize the CCRT mission and advance towards the CCRT vision for Chehalis. CCRT will focus on the initiatives and actions resulting from these priorities during the 2020 – 2025 period.

## Definitions:

- Priority: The ultimate outcome CCRT is striving to achieve
- Initiative: A plan of action to achieve a specific priority
- Action Items: Detailed projects or steps to fulfill an initiative

## Priority #1: Rebrand CCRT

While CCRT's outcomes are well-known in the community, the CCRT brand is not. This impedes potential community partnerships and limits volunteer support. Rebranding CCRT to align with the new mission and vision will ultimately deliver a more vibrant Chehalis by increasing CCRT's visibility.

### **Initiative: Create new organization name and media presence**

The CCRT name, logo, and website are outdated and do not resonate with the general Chehalis audience. Revitalizing these organizational elements will broaden market appeal and, when done intentionally, enhance donor support and promotion tactics.

#### *Action Items and Timeline*

- A. Hire branding consultant to build on vision, mission, and values to craft a new organization name, distinctive logo, and complete branding package
- B. Update the CCRT website, mailers, and social media platforms to reflect name and logo changes and build name recognition
- C. Run branding campaign (both digitally and through community networks) to communicate changes

Action Item	Responsible Committee	Timeline	Measure of Success
A	Board	June 2021	Rebrand is completed with fidelity, on schedule, and meets stated expectations
B	Promotions	June 2021	Rebrand is reflected on all CCRT promotional platforms
C	Promotions	June 2022	Branding campaign results in increased name recognition and community interaction with organization

**Initiative: Communicate events, opportunities, and progress of action steps**

The need to communicate with Chehalis residents is urgent as CCRT navigates its new visibility within Lewis County. Sharing success with the community will increase organizational awareness and garner more involvement in CCRT opportunities.

***Action Plan and Timeline***

- A. Leverage rebranding results/website update and volunteer engagement to increase business and community network and bring in new stakeholders
- B. Create brand tagline to be attached to digital and physical community projects
- C. Maintain regular communication with community that details progress on priorities, involvement opportunities, and CCRT success stories

Action Item	Responsible Committee	Timeline	Measure of Success
A	Promotions	June 2021	Lead an awareness campaign with new identity to communicate CCRT goals
B	Promotions	June 2021	As part of rebranding process, create a standard “brought to you by...” decal to create project ownership
C	Promotions	June 2023	Maintain campaign-based marketing tactics on website, social media, and other CCRT informational sources

## Priority #2: Enhance Programs & Services

This Strategic Plan does not capture the complete work plan of CCRT's vast project list, but instead explores how to enhance certain programs following themes emerging from the revised mission and vision. Enhancing programs and services will ultimately deliver a more vibrant Chehalis by fostering an exciting and functional downtown.

### **Initiative: Expand Façade Improvement Program**

CCRT works to promote downtown revitalization by providing funds to help maintain business façades. Including digital business façades will scale the CCRT network and enhance the downtown area by directly impacting community businesses.

#### *Action Plan and Timeline*

- A. Outline logistics for the quick roll-out of a Digital Business Façade Improvement Program (scope, feasibility, budget requirements, advertisement, etc.)
- B. Create standard policies and practices surrounding eligibility, limitations, and scheduling for long-term project implementation
- C. Maintain increased reserves to accommodate increased façade projects

Action Item	Responsible Committee	Timeline	Measure of Success
A	Board	June 2020	Toolkit currently being implemented in the face of current pandemic environment
B	Economic Restructuring	June 2021	Produce clear guidelines and application instructions for distribution
C	Organization	June 2023	Use Funding Development Program to identify potential donors/revenue sources

### **Initiative: Support continued education for business owners**

CCRT's Downtown Business Academy (DBA) assists business owners in thinking strategically about their operation. Expanding remote DBA events will support businesses through the current environment and the new online era of business.

#### *Action Plan and Timeline*

- A. Develop class topics relevant to elements of online business strategy and advertise within the business community
- B. Expand availability of individual business consulting/strategy sessions
- C. Elevate DBA's position within the community through increased marketing and advertising of available resources



Action Item	Responsible Committee	Timeline	Measure of Success
A	Economic Restructuring	September 2021	Survey local businesses to identify needs and potential traditional and alternative virtual class topics
B	Economic Restructuring	June 2021	Develop standard practices around business consulting sessions and increase bandwidth to support expansion
C	Promotions	June 2023	Increased enrollment/utilization of DBA resources, increased digital traffic related to DBA resources

**Initiative: Establish a successful volunteer recruitment program**

Empowering community members to volunteer can help continually expand CCRT's outcomes and impact. It will also create space for the board leadership to move beyond project management and invest in continued CCRT strategic organizational planning.

*Action Plan and Timeline*

- A. Redefine the Organization Committee as in line with the Main Street principles of "creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district"
  - i. In this creation, define guidelines for volunteer recruitment and volunteerism policies and best practices
- B. Create clear volunteer requirements and volunteer appreciation incentives
- C. Identify needs for volunteers within CCRT organizational structure and use network and online platforms to fill any opportunities

Action Item	Responsible Committee	Timeline	Measure of Success
A	Organization	June 2021	Developed Organization Committee work guidelines that address volunteerism
B	Organization	June 2023	Create norms and expectations about standardized volunteer opportunities
C	Board and Promotions	June 2023	Survey CCRT committees and projects for volunteer needs and advertise availabilities

**Initiative: Improve mobility in the downtown core**

There are structural opportunities on Market Boulevard that would increase usability. Recognizing that Market Boulevard reconstruction is ultimately a City of Chehalis project, being a voice in this project for businesses connects to CCRT's values.

***Action Plan and Timeline***

- A. Use community network to gather the business perspective of public infrastructure needs and design opportunities and share with City representatives
- B. Create an action plan for businesses with guidance on conducting businesses amidst construction and attracting business downtown
- C. Collaborate with City in design aspects of the reconstruction process, as makes sense for their stated project timeline

Action Item	Responsible Committee	Timeline	Measure of Success
A	Board	June 2023	Compile findings from conversations in network for City Planning representatives
B	Promotions and Economic Restructuring	June 2023	Maintain website with current, relevant information and guidance for businesses affected by construction
C	Design	June 2025	Survey sites for potential CCRT projects like murals, parks, beautification, etc.

## Priority #3: Diversify Funding Sources

As a Main Street organization, CCRT supports businesses through economic development and community support programs. Diversifying funding sources will ultimately deliver a more vibrant Chehalis by strengthening resources that allow CCRT to invest in the community in powerful ways.

### **Initiative: Increase alternative revenue sources**

The B&O tax currently represents 52% of CCRT's revenue base. This heavy reliance is unsustainable in the long run; to maintain a stable financial platform, CCRT must diversify its revenue and view economic development from a broader perspective.

#### *Action Plan and Timeline*

- A. Create more opportunities for sponsorship of specific CCRT projects
- B. Develop a Funding Development Program to identify new revenue streams
- C. Research peer Main Street organizations for insight on fundraising tactics
- D. Coordinate the sale of Chehalis-themed merchandise at local store fronts

Action Item	Responsible Committee	Timeline	Measure of Success
A	Board	September 2021	Identify projects that lend themselves to sponsorship and potential sponsors; market projects to identified funders
B	Organization	September 2021	Organize a functional Funding Development Program within committee
C	Board	September 2021	Establish peer organizations and assign board members to research them
D	Organization and Design	June 2023	Collaborate with local artists to create designs for relevant merchandise Identify businesses interested in partnering and create working agreement

## Priority #4: Cultivate Civic Pride

The Chehalis community is experiencing positive momentum; fostering strong community ties will be an important factor in business development, enhancing sense of place, and encouraging immigration. Cultivating civic pride will ultimately deliver a more vibrant Chehalis by increasing community connections.

### **Initiative: Nurture programs that support civic engagement opportunities**

Building a relationship with the Chehalis School District and creating civic engagement opportunities for students will instill hometown pride. Connecting youth with the local community will increase the likelihood that students will stay local or return to Chehalis.

#### *Action Plan and Timeline*

- A. Assess existing opportunities and activities that connect students of all ages to the community
- B. Connect students to business network through job shadowing, civic engagement, technical training, volunteering, and apprenticeships
- C. Connect with high school clubs/societies to advertise volunteer opportunities

Action Item	Responsible Committee	Timeline	Measure of Success
A	Board	September 2021	Compile all opportunities for development and community involvement programs
B	Board	June 2023	Identify interested businesses and advertise opportunities to students
C	Promotions	June 2023	Identify volunteer needs and create advertisements to student audience

### **Initiative: Strengthen relationship with Chehalis Foundation**

A strong Chehalis brand and cohesive messaging between CCRT and the Chehalis Foundation can help both organizations better reach their shared community at all levels. Collaborating on mutually beneficial projects will increase outcomes and impact.

#### *Action Plan and Timeline*

- A. Foster connection between boards through regular communication and meeting attendance
- B. Identify common goals and potential projects fit for collaboration
- C. Maintain long-term organizational relationship with Foundation board that is based on shared interest and community ties

Action Item	Responsible Committee	Timeline	Measure of Success
A	Board Representatives	June 2021	Reach out to Foundation's board president/executive director to begin cultivating relationship
B	Board	June 2022	Compare CCRT potential projects with Foundation potential projects to find commonalities
C	Board Representatives	June 2024	Attend each other's meetings, partner on community initiatives, cultivate strong working relationship