



SMYRNA'S VISION FOR THE COMMUNITY RFP RESPONSE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Scope of Work	2
Project Management Plan.....	12
Project Team.....	13
Firm Experience	18
Project Cost.....	19
Conclusion	20



INTRODUCTION

What makes a great community? In our previous response to the City's initial request, we referenced the many lists, rankings, and theories that abound. Ultimately, however, based on the experience that *Market Street* has gained from facilitating vision plans and strategies in more than 150 communities in 33 states, we propose that the most vibrant communities are those that have a clearly-articulated vision, customized to the specific assets, challenges, and people who have chosen to live and do business in the community. Further, the vision plans that are most successfully implemented are those created with broad citizen support and early buy-in into the process.

Smyrna is already in an enviable position, having all of the fundamental components that are needed to be a thriving community. The goal now is to take Smyrna to the next level, and ensure that the City's leaders are fully aware of the public's vision for the future. This "bottom up" approach to visioning is the right step for the City to take, and the process *Market Street* has outlined provides a framework for soliciting the kind of feedback that is needed and combining that input with a clear picture of Smyrna's realities. In addition to reaffirming existing trends and facts, our team will also bring new information of value.

What we've learned during the course of this selection process has been incorporated into this final proposal. While the basic framework of the process has not changed, based on conversations with the client, we have replaced the intensive economic structure assessment (Target Business Analysis) with more opportunities for community engagement and a robust report on the City's level of retail leakage and surplus. The City's Granicus platform will be fully leveraged, and all previous and ongoing planning efforts will be integrated into this process. What kind of community will Smyrna be in 10 years? What message is being sent to future residents and businesses, and does that align with the community's vision? Will the City become more of a regional employment center? Will there be a focus on attracting families and young professionals? Do Smyrna's citizens envision the community as one that will allow them to age in place? These are just some of the questions that our process will encourage community members to address.

Our recommendation is for Smyrna to embark on a three-phase process that looks at every aspect of the community. The process is designed to significantly supplement the initial community visioning discussions that have taken place recently with extensive and ongoing opportunities for citizen engagement.

Our firm's qualifications are outlined in detail in the following pages, and our team's local knowledge and county, region, and state experience is unparalleled. We have been engaged three times in the past three years to create strategic plans for Cobb County organizations, and our management team includes a Smyrna resident and local volunteer. At the same time, we bring the objectivity needed for this process through our careful selection of team members that have never worked in Smyrna. Together, we believe that *Market Street* and the City of Smyrna can create an inspiring Vision for the Community. We are eager to join Smyrna's leaders and citizens as a vested partner in this exciting process.





SCOPE OF WORK

Working closely with City leaders, the business community, and leading Smyrna citizens, our team will facilitate a comprehensive process that culminates with a clear ten-year vision plan for Smyrna and guidelines to direct the City and its partners in implementation activities. Our process will build upon leadership retreats held in 2010 and 2012 but will also start with a blank slate and fully leverage our firm's experience working in communities throughout the country and our objective perspective concerning Smyrna's needs and opportunities.

CLIENT OVERSIGHT

While there is a great deal of work for the *Market Street* team to manage throughout this process, there are also critical tasks that can only be performed by Smyrna City staff and other local leaders. These tasks and responsibilities can be divided between the Steering Committee appointed to lead this process, a Technical Advisory Group, and Mayor and Council. The roles for each of the three groups are outlined below and on the following pages.

Steering Committee

As has been previously expressed, one of fundamental beliefs at *Market Street* is that our role is to provide the very best research and facilitation that is available, yet key decisions related to the final vision plan and its components must be made by volunteer leaders entrusted by the City to guide the process. *Market Street* recommends that a Steering Committee be formed to guide the process, consisting of 20–25 individuals, and would be led by two or three individuals representing the public, private, and possibly nonprofit sector. The Steering Committee would function as a task force charged with vetting all findings and making recommendations, and would report out to Mayor, Council, and the public at large after each meeting via a Community Briefing that could be televised via the City's Granicus platform.

The Steering Committee should include key members of the public and private sectors who, combined, are diverse and represent the interests of the community at large. Bringing together the right group is key to ensuring early buy-in for this process and is the first step toward ensuring that the process is as inclusive as possible.

Potential committee members include: one or two members of the City's Visioning Committee; leaders in the community ("super citizens"); business leaders (large and small employers); civic leaders; educational leaders (from Smyrna City Schools, the Smyrna Education Foundation or other school-based foundations, and Cobb County School System); social service and non-profit leaders; elected officials; faith-based representatives; a Smyrna Business Association representative; a member of the Cobb's Competitive EDGE Implementation Committee and/or Cobb Chamber; and representatives of other organizations key to implementation. We recommend that one of the three Visioning Committee members consider not serving on the Steering Committee as a way of providing Mayor and Council with an objective view of the process as a whole, but will defer to the City regarding the final composition of the Steering Committee.



The responsibilities of the Steering Committee will be to:

- ✓ Trust the process;
- ✓ Put the needs of the Smyrna ahead of personal and business interests;
- ✓ Be a consensus builder;
- ✓ Keep the "big picture" in focus;
- ✓ Attend and actively participate in meetings over the course of the process;
- ✓ Share knowledge of the Smyrna's strengths and weaknesses with *Market Street*;
- ✓ Invest the time needed to review draft reports and be prepared to discuss the deliverables in detail at Steering Committee meetings;
- ✓ Make decisions about the strategic planning process, including the approval of final documents;
- ✓ Be an active proponent of the process;
- ✓ Suspend judgment and listen to other Steering Committee members' input;
- ✓ Maintain confidentiality of discussions held in meetings and draft reports; and
- ✓ Commit to the successful, timely implementation, and tracking of the strategic recommendations.

Throughout the effort, *Market Street* will work closely with the Steering Committee to keep the process on track and verify key issues. The Steering Committee will meet approximately every four to six weeks, sequenced around the presentation of project deliverables, with *Market Street* facilitating the meetings. It is anticipated that the seven Steering Committee meetings will occur over the course of seven months following project initiation activities, as outlined in the Project Management Plan later in this proposal.

Technical Advisory Group

Market Street recommends creating a small Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of 5-10 City staff level professionals to support the work of Steering Committee, including reviewing draft deliverables and providing input to Committee members. The TAG could observe Committee meetings if desired and would be able to appoint a liaison to participate in all team planning calls. This group will include key staff from Community Development and other relevant departments.

Our experience indicates that community engagement works best when the client appoints one or more key staff to serve as a resource on a day-to-day basis. This type of support often includes the collection of needed information and materials (past reports and studies, calendars and scheduled, etc.) and the administrative management of stakeholder interview and focus group scheduling.

Our expectation is that there will be more work on the front end of the process for City staff than during the middle and end of the process, as decisions are made, communications roles are established, and information is collected. In the first month of planning, the client-based tasks require between 10 and 25 percent of a key staff person's time. During the peak two weeks of input scheduling, administrative support staff assisting with invitations and RSVPs are likely to spend approximately 15 percent of time on the project. After the initial kickoff meeting and input sessions, the weekly City staff time required decreases by half.



Mayor and Council

The involvement of Mayor Bacon and all seven City Council members in this process is important and critical to the ultimate success of the vision plan. At the same time, given that the City has indicated that the goal of the process is to inform Mayor and Council of the community's vision, our team recommends ensuring that Smyrna's elected officials are regularly updated throughout the process regarding the Steering Committee's progress. This will help align all expectations while still empowering the Steering Committee to fully direct the process. Based on our firm's experience and the direction received to date, we recommend that the Mayor and Council be invited to all community briefings and also are also consulted and briefed during Council work sessions. We recommend that the *Market Street* team and Steering Committee leadership meet with Mayor and Council at least three times throughout the process.

PROJECT INITIATION

Market Street will meet in person with members of the Visioning Committee and the City of Smyrna staff as soon as possible to conduct an initial project kickoff meeting. This meeting, which will be based on an agenda of high priority discussion items, will provide an opportunity for the *Market Street* team and Smyrna City staff and leadership to get acquainted and make decisions about critical issues that will affect the remainder of the process. There are a number of agenda items that should be covered during the initial weeks of project planning, including:

- ✓ Internal communications process (Market Street and City staff and leadership)
- ✓ Detailed project timeline
- ✓ Steering Committee membership
- ✓ Benchmark communities
- ✓ Community engagement
- ✓ Communications plan
- ✓ Familiarization tour
- ✓ Kickoff Steering Committee meeting agenda and expectations

Familiarization tour

Although several members of our team are very well-acquainted with the Smyrna environs, there is still great value to be gained from a community familiarization tour during the first few weeks of the process. The purpose of the "fam tour" is to ensure that our core project staff gains a first-hand understanding of the City and has an opportunity early in the process to visit amenities, sites, and institutions that are critical to Smyrna's sense of community, competitive position, and the ultimate success of the vision plan. It also provides City staff, who will ideally guide the *Market Street* team on the tour, with an opportunity to share pertinent information about specific assets, challenges, and developments throughout the community. Fam tours provide critical "aha moments" to our project team immediately and throughout the process. Lessons learned from recent familiarization tours include:

- ✓ How different communities define and cultivate quality of life
- ✓ Providing necessary context for input gathered during the later stakeholder input sessions



- ✓ Squaring local perceptions or long-held opinions with on the ground realities
- ✓ Identifying opportunities for future development/capital investments
- ✓ Identifying gaps in services/amenities
- ✓ Teasing out *real* competitive advantages from generalized community assets

The team will also meet with City of Smyrna staff members during the visit to conduct informal interviews and coordinate further planning activities. Potential points of interest during the fam tour might include:

- ✓ Market Village and nearby municipal buildings and community facilities
- ✓ Taylor-Browner Park, Tolleson Park, the Silver Comet trail, Community Garden, and other high-use recreational areas, including dog parks and athletic facilities
- ✓ North Smyrna Opportunity Zone, redevelopment sites, and key intersections
- ✓ Highlands Parkway, Lake Park Drive, and other select retail, office, and industrial space sites
- ✓ Campbell High School, both middle schools, and select elementary and private schools
- ✓ Range of housing and neighborhoods
- ✓ Community entryways

Phase 1

Community Assessment

The first phase of this process will combine qualitative and quantitative research to produce a clear profile of the City. The Assessment will expand on the Community Profile information provided on the City's website and will update many of the data indicators compiled for the "Demographics, Trends, and Implications" presentation during the 2010 retreat. Understanding that a great deal of information has already been gathered and is available to City leaders, staff, and the public, the focus of this Assessment will be to provide a summary foundation of information for everyone engaged in the process.

An initial Steering Committee kickoff meeting will be held once all project initiation tasks are completed or well underway. This meeting will be followed by the first of seven community briefings, as previously described, as well as the two days of intensive in-person feedback sessions (focus groups and interviews).

As part of the quantitative component of this Assessment, our team will provide greater context to existing reports about the City's competitive position by benchmarking Smyrna to three high quality, comparable communities, Georgia, and the nation. We recommend that at least one of the three communities be located outside of the state, and that one of the three also be more of an "aspirational" place, rather than another "peer" community. Benchmarking has proven to be incredibly valuable in educating a large group of citizens and leaders with different perspectives and varying degrees of familiarity with demographic and economic data.

If available, any surveys, qualitative input and research done prior to Village Green and Market Village development would be used to inform our analysis of trends and changes over time.

Rather than creating charts for dozens of data points, the Community Assessment will synthesize key findings from a wide range of data and existing reports to frame the discussion around the key "stories" and competitive issues facing Smyrna. This approach is intended to produce a



resource that does not simply identify key findings but uses them to determine strategic implications for the community. The deliverable will ensure that all the key players – the public at large, Mayor and Council, and City staff – are all on the same page about Smyrna's "current realities" prior to moving forward in the process. Myths will be dispelled but not ignored. It is critical that our team, and the full range of players, also understand the perceptions that exist, as these are often as important as the facts.

Our firm's commitment to holistic community and economic development strategic planning ensures that the Assessment will answer key questions about Smyrna's People, the City as a Place, and economic issues that affect the City's long-term Prosperity. Our approach will focus on:

- ✓ Demographic and socioeconomic trends such as population growth, age composition, racial/ethnic composition, educational attainment, income and poverty.
- ✓ Quality of place issues ranging from home prices, housing composition, and commuting trends to public school performance, community amenities, and public safety.
- ✓ Economic conditions, including employment, unemployment, labor force participation, economic composition, tax climate, etc.

Business sector analysis

The Community Assessment will also include a more in-depth analysis of retail opportunities and business sectors that are the best fit for Smyrna. The Assessment will be informed by what we learn from this process as well as what we already know about the labor shed and regional economy. For example, we will identify and discuss Cobb EDGE targets that are *not* strong fits for Smyrna as well as county-level target business sectors that *are* strong fits for Smyrna. Where relevant, the research our team conducted for the Metro Atlanta Regional Economic Competitiveness Strategy in 2012 will be referenced as well.

As part of this component, our team will also include a Retail Leakage and Supply Analysis using data supplied by Buxton. The Retail Leakage and Supply Analysis provides an estimate of retail dollars flowing in or out of Smyrna and will include up to three specific sites. The two main components of this analysis are: 1) current sales (supply) by retail store type, in dollar amounts, and 2) estimated sales potential (demand) for retail store type, in dollar amounts.

This data will include a sales gap index that illustrates how well Smyrna's businesses are capturing residents' expenditures. The sales gap index provides a relative comparison of leakage/surplus and an estimate of the dollars that are being spent outside the trade area (leakage) and the amount of dollars coming in from outside the trade area (surplus). Given the community's focus on retail options and the City's many roles (planning and zoning, "connector and curator," etc.), the value of this leakage and surplus report will provide everyone with a clear understanding of the state of Smyrna's retail business sector.

Ultimately, our quantitative analysis of business sector opportunities will be married with feedback received concerning the types of businesses City residents and business owners envision as a good fit for Smyrna.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The quantitative assessment provides only a portion of the Community Assessment. There is a great deal of qualitative input and community engagement that will inform this process. Although there will be opportunities throughout the process to engage the community, a large portion of the feedback will be collected during this first phase.

While the City of Smyrna website and the thinksmyrna.com site should be used to promote the process, provide updates, and solicit feedback, our team also recommends the

development of a dedicated project website that will act as a clearinghouse for information and serve as a gateway to the variety of other online tools and platforms. The project website, which represents a very small portion of the overall project cost, will be regularly updated with progress reports, deliverables, and community meeting notices and will provide easy access to the online survey. An example of a current project website can be found at: maconbibbedstrategy.com.

The following stakeholder input mechanisms have been very successful in communities that – like Smyrna – are truly seeking the involvement of their citizenry.

In-person Input

Critical to the success of this vision planning process is the inclusion of stakeholders in the development of the core tenets and priorities of the vision plan. This component will provide the Steering Committee feedback from community members on Smyrna's accomplishments and successes thus far, as well as the challenges and unrealized opportunities that remain. It will also educate and engage the broader public about the issues that affect Smyrna's ability to maintain and enhance the quality of life available to its citizens.

Perhaps most importantly, by fully engaging Smyrna's citizens, the City of Smyrna will be able to ensure that its vision plan was written *by* the community, and not only elected officials or a consulting team. In fact, the vision plan is intended to inform the future planning and decision-making of the Mayor and Council.

Focus groups and interviews: *Market Street* would conduct two days of input, which would allow for 12-15 interviews (a full hour each) and 8-10 focus groups (one to two hours), each of which would accommodate 15-20 individuals. This represents what we perceive as the minimum input necessary to adequately inform the research and vision phases. Ideal interview candidates are key business leaders; elected officials; economic development partners in Cobb County and at the regional and state level; representatives from the education community; and other community leaders. Anyone considered as a Steering Committee member but unavailable due to scheduling conflicts would be included in this list.

Working closely with the City's Community Relations team, our team anticipates creating a communications calendar and supporting plan that provides a clear framework for all messages and engagement opportunities. A frequently asked questions (FAQ) guide can also be provided.



Focus group categories could include small business owners and entrepreneurs; larger employers; parents; K-12 educators; young professionals; recreation and cultural amenity providers; and key City staff. The appropriate schedule, balance, and composition of interviews and focus groups will be determined during the Project Initiation Phase.

Each focus group will include a breakout session in which participants form smaller groups to explore a series of questions related to their vision of Smyrna's preferred future. Breakout groups will be tasked with developing key words and phrases that the Steering Committee can leverage in developing a vision statement to guide Smyrna's Vision for the Community.

Online input

Market Street has many years of experience and success working with our clients to effectively promote surveys and other online engagement tools. Promotion efforts would likely include leveraging the City's Facebook page, its Twitter account, using email lists from City departments, Smyrna's public, charter, and private schools, and advertising in neighborhood newsletters. Select placements in media outlets such as *Smyrna-Vinings Patch*, *Our Town* magazine, and others could also be beneficial. There are two primary aspects of the online input component of this process, described as follows.

thinksmyrna.com: Interactive, highly accessible tools such as the Granicus tools recently adopted by the City can be incredibly helpful in creating "buzz" around a community-wide project. While such tools are not an end unto themselves, our team will manage the use of this technology to ensure that it **creates** momentum for the process, **connects** citizens to opportunities for input, and **constructs** the foundation for the City's vision statement and the actionable and measurable goals to be implemented over the next 10 years. While we envision the thinksmyrna.com site being used throughout the process, there will be an emphasis on using the social ideation element during the creation of the vision plan outline in order to generate a robust collection of strategic recommendations early in Phase 2.

Online survey: Understanding that the thinksmyrna.com site will allow for idea and issue-specific polling, *Market Street* recommends using an in-depth online survey option for a detailed assessment of challenges and opportunities. Our clients have had great success using surveys that that would be open to all residents and employers in Smyrna. The survey will ask a variety of questions related to the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges, soliciting resident input that will directly inform the development of the Vision Plan. The survey would be used in addition to the polling tool available from Granicus in order to ensure that our team is able to use cross-tabulation analyses methods by demographics and zip code to understand what different constituencies are thinking. Like the project website, this component is a cost-effective and proven method that will integrate seamlessly into the City's Granicus platform.

The Community Assessment deliverable will "connect the dots" between existing and new information, quantitative and qualitative data, and realities and perceptions. Our team will review the findings with the TAG and Steering Committee and with Steering Committee leadership, will co-present an Executive Summary to Mayor, Council, and the public at the second Community Briefing.



Smyrna's Vision for the Community

The findings from the first phase of the process provide the foundation for the development of Smyrna's Vision for the Community. Smyrna leaders and City staff have already taken several steps that will give this phase of the process a head start. The 2010 City Council Retreat and the 2012 follow-up retreat provided an excellent opportunity for initial discussions about Smyrna's major issues and what elements a vision for the City might include. The goal at this point is to generate a similar outline of major issues and vision options from the community at large.

Our team will use all information available including the extensive feedback provided by the community during the first phases of the process to inform our initial recommendations for the vision plan, inclusive of over-arching goals, clear objectives, and tactical action steps.

While it would be a disservice to the process to attempt to predict the details of what will be included in the vision plan, it is anticipated that it could feature some of the following components:

- ✓ Quality of life assets and preferences
- ✓ Business retention, expansion and support for small businesses and entrepreneurs
 - Including a focus on prime redevelopment opportunities and opportunities related to Market Village and other retail and commercial nodes
- ✓ Physical enhancements and beautification efforts, outside of or in addition to the City's Capital Improvement Plan
- ✓ Housing composition and balance
- ✓ Educational, cultural, and recreational assets needed for family retention, complementing the recently updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- ✓ Marketing efforts (locally, regionally, and beyond)

The development of the vision plan will be guided by a proven approach that encourages full engagement by the Steering Committee. Our methods include the steps outlined as follows.

Vision statement and plan outline: The Steering Committee will have the opportunity to develop language for a vision statement that distills the Committee members' ideas about Smyrna's preferred future into a one- to two-sentence phrase. The Vision Statement will capture the community's identity and answer the question, "What is Smyrna's 'niche?'" The Steering Committee will participate in a visioning exercise similar to those conducted with each focus group (as described in the Community Engagement section of Phase 1), working with the *Market Street* team to develop a vision statement that reflects the community's input. Ideally, this visioning exercise will be conducted during the meeting at the end of Phase 1 (Community Assessment) to inform the creation of an outline that will be discussed during the first of three Steering Committee meetings during Phase 2.

Draft vision and strategic framework: The initial draft of Smyrna's Vision for the Community will include suggested goals for each key issue area, with close guidance from the Steering Committee. Potential



objectives and action steps for each goal area will be discussed and explored. These recommendations will be informed by existing plans, research, and extensive stakeholder and Steering Committee input.

Intensive Steering Committee feedback: Before the draft vision plan is finalized, *Market Street* will incorporate feedback provided by the Steering Committee. Facilitating robust discussions around the proposed strategic elements and incorporating edits to balance what is realistically achievable with the civic responsibility to be visionary and bold is crucial to "getting it right."

- ✓ Prior to the meeting, members will be asked to complete a Steering Committee online survey related to the draft vision plan's recommendations, the degree to which they support the recommendations, and how they should be prioritized. The survey will also provide an opportunity for committee members to refine the draft vision statement.
- ✓ *Market Street* will use these survey results to identify areas of consensus and disagreement using objective, statistical analysis. These results will help the Steering Committee refine the draft vision plan's recommendations while also moving the Committee towards a discussion of implementation priorities (a component of the proposed Implementation Guidelines discussed in Phase 3).
- ✓ During the meeting, PowerPoint-compatible Turning Point interactive voting could also be used to further spur conversation. Turning Point is an interactive audience-response technology that allows committee members to confidentially provide feedback and make immediate decisions based on real-time, collective feedback, moving the committee towards consensus.

Best practice recommendations: *Market Street* will supplement the vision plan with examples of best practices from across the nation that provide additional guidance related to individual components of the plan. These best practices showcase what trailblazers in the field are doing in order to demonstrate what is possible and to be a catalyst for conversation and excitement about how Smyrna may develop its own best-practice approaches.

Final version – Smyrna's Vision for the Community: The final plan will incorporate the feedback provided by the Steering Committee as well as the best practices described above.

As with the first two meetings of the Steering Committee, both meetings during this phase will be followed by community briefings to inform the public of progress and gauge concerns and questions for the Steering Committee to consider as they move forward.



Phase 3

Implementation Guidelines

One of *Market Street's* core beliefs is that when the strategic planning process is complete, the real work begins. Timely and effective implementation is critical to the ultimate success of the Smyrna's Vision for the Community. If the vision plan represents **what** Smyrna can do to maximize the City's assets, the Implementation Guidelines explain **how** to do it. The Guidelines will enable elected officials, City staff, and volunteers to secure early implementation victories and continue to build momentum for overall activation of the plan. Components of the Implementation Guidelines include:

Key Implementation Considerations: For each individual recommendation included within the vision plan, the *Market Street* team will work with the Steering Committee to identify lead implementer(s), supporting partners, estimated costs for implementation, potential sources of funding, and a timeline for implementation. Given that the City will naturally be tasked with directly implementing many of the strategic actions included in the vision plan, it will be necessary to identify which departments will take the lead on certain components. In addition, partner organizations may also be better positioned to lead implementation on certain recommendations and will be identified during this phase (e.g., the Smyrna Business Association may be able to take a leadership role related to small business education efforts, or similar recommendations).

Capacity Assessments: *Market Street* will assess the existing capacity of the City of Smyrna to implement the plan, based on discussions with City officials and key staff. This will include both funding and personnel dynamics. When an estimated implementation budget has been developed, *Market Street* will assist in determining how to best mitigate resource or staff-capacity shortfalls.

Measurement Tools: The Implementation Guidelines will include benchmarks and performance measures that will enable Smyrna's leaders to track implementation progress and goal attainment.

As in previous phases, both meetings of the Steering Committee during this phase will be followed by community briefings to inform the public of progress and gauge concerns and questions for the Steering Committee to consider as they move forward.

Many communities choose to host a public gathering to energize the community and build support for the plan once the process is complete. We recommend discussing the value and timing of a more formal "rollout" once the process is underway and are available to assist with planning if desired.



PROJECT TEAM

One quality that distinguishes *Market Street* from the field of consultants is the team that we have developed over the years. Our staff consists of 11 professionals who have a combined 60 years of experience at *Market Street*. We are a dedicated group of people fully committed to the work of developing vision plans and economic and community development strategies. The City of Smyrna will benefit from our longevity in this business, and the insight that comes from this unwavering focus.

This is a *partnership* and not just a contract or research project for us. We are confident that our team will become trusted advisors over the course of this process rather than presenting a revolving door of new faces and disconnected and disjointed individuals. In addition to having daily access to the expertise of our dedicated project team for this process, the City of Smyrna will also benefit from the ongoing lessons learned and best practices that our full staff encounters on an ongoing basis. Our team continuity creates lasting relationships throughout years of strategy implementation and beyond. Two-thirds of our engagements are with returning clients or communities who have been referred to us directly.

LOCAL
INSIGHT AND
COMMUNITY
KNOWLEDGE

Kathy Young, Director of Operations and one of the firm's four Principals – and a City of Smyrna resident – will guide the team throughout this process, particularly during the project initiation stage. Kathy will be heavily involved with the development of the familiarization tour itinerary, stakeholder input sessions, community engagement and communication strategies, and other components that will benefit from additional "on the ground" context. She will ensure that her involvement adds value to the process without disproportionately influencing the strategic direction of the vision plan.

OBJECTIVE TEAM
LEADERSHIP AND
FRESH
VIEWPOINT

Jonathan Miller will serve as the Team Leader for this process and will function as the day-to-day contact for Steering Committee leadership and TAG. Jonathan will coordinate all meetings, input sessions, and visits to the community and will provide the City with a single point of contact on all matters related to the visioning process. His objective perspective will ensure full "third-party" validation of the process and the resulting vision plan.

LOCAL AND
STATE-LEVEL
PRACTITIONER
PERSPECTIVE

Market Street's CEO and founder, J. Mac Holladay will be engaged throughout the process and can provide direct advisement to elected officials and volunteer leaders as needed. Mr. Holladay has been in the community and economic development field since 1972. He served three Chambers of Commerce over a 13 year period and is the only individual to head state level economic development organizations in three different states, including Georgia.

COUNTY AND
REGIONAL
EXPERIENCE

The team will include significant involvement by our Senior Manager, Research and Projects (Matthew Tarleton), who is also one of the firm's four Principals. Over the past three years, Matthew led our team's work on the Cobb EDGE process, two projects for Cobb Travel and Tourism, and the Metro Atlanta Regional Economic Development Strategy. He also recently managed two community visioning processes (Vestavia Hills, AL and Watertown, SD) that provide a number of excellent lessons learned and best practices for the Smyrna process.





The project team will be rounded out by several other members of our team, including experienced researchers and our Director of Projects, all of whom have relevant experience. An organizational chart is provided below to illustrate the capacity of our firm, followed by individual bios.



J. Mac Holladay, CCE, PCED
CEO, Founder
and Principal



Kathy Young
Director of Operations
and Principal



Alex Pearlstein
Director of Projects
and Principal



Matthew Tarleton
Senior Manager, Research &
Projects and Principal



Jonathan Miller
Smyrna Team Leader



Christa Tinsley Spaht
Project Manager



James G. Vaughan, Jr., CCE
Senior Fellow



Ranada Robinson
Senior Research Associate



Evan Robertson
Project Associate



Alexia Alvey
Operations Manager



Stephanie Allen
Project Assistant

J. MAC HOLLADAY, CCE, PCED, LM, HLM *Chief Executive Officer*

J. Mac Holladay is the founder and CEO of *Market Street Services*. Mac has been in the community and economic development field since 1972. He served three Chambers of Commerce over a 13-year period and is the only individual to head state-level economic development organizations in three different states.

Mac served as Chief Operating Officer for the Governor's Development Council of Georgia from June 1993 to July 1997. Prior to 1993, he served as the State Director for the Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development (1988–1992) and the South Carolina Development Board (1985–1988).

His professional career began in his hometown of Memphis, Tennessee, following five years as a U.S. Naval Aviator, three of which were spent in the Far East, including service in Vietnam. During his four years at the Memphis Area Chamber of Commerce, Mac served as Director of Special Projects, Associate Vice President



of the Convention Bureau, and Vice President of Member Relations. He then served as President of the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce in Indiana, and from 1979 to 1985, he was the President of the Charleston Trident Chamber of Commerce in Charleston, South Carolina.

His professional honors include being named a Certified Chamber Executive (CCE) in 1982 and serving as president of both the Indiana and South Carolina Chamber of Commerce Executives. Mac was a member of the Commission of the Future of the South from 1986 to 1992 and was the Chairman of the Board of Regents of Leadership South Carolina from 1984 to 1988. He was selected as a member of the 1986 class of the International Business Fellows and has served on the Board and Executive Committee of the Society of International Business Fellows. He was Co-Chairman of the Southern Technology Council of the Southern Growth Policies Board in 1991. He was named a Professional Community and Economic Developer (PCED) in 2006, a Life Member of the American Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) association in 2009, and given the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2011 by Leadership South Carolina. The Southern Economic Development Council named him an Honorary Life Member at its 2012 Annual Meeting.

Mac now serves on the board of the Alliance for Regional Stewardship; the Board of Directors for the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, the Atlanta Educational Telecommunications Collaborative (AETC), and the Community Growth Education Foundation of American Chamber of Commerce Executives; the National Advisory Board for the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation at the University of Mississippi; the Advisory Board of Washington and Lee Alumni College; and the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Multistate Taxation and Incentives*. Mac speaks across the country on the topics of community and economic development and has been quoted in a wide variety of publications including *BusinessWeek*, *Fortune*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *Bloomberg News*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and many other newspapers.

He is a graduate of Washington and Lee University and was recognized by the University as a Distinguished Alumnus in May of 2012. He holds an honorary doctorate in Business Administration from Johnson & Wales University. Mac has been named the outstanding faculty presenter at the Basic Economic Development Courses at Georgia Institute of Technology, Auburn University, Louisiana State University, and the Universities of North Carolina, Kentucky, Arkansas-Little Rock, Tennessee, and Southern Mississippi.

Mac is married to the former Carolyn Gordon Howe and has two daughters, Jennifer and Sarah; two step-children, Sarah and Alec; and four grandchildren. Avid travelers, in recent years the Holladays have spent time exploring Tanzania, America's National Parks, Vienna, Ireland, Israel, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. When not traveling for business or pleasure, you can find him courtside at an Atlanta Hawks game, taking in a performance of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, or spending time with his family and dog, Elvis, at their home in West Virginia.

KATHY YOUNG

Director of Operations

Kathy Young has worked in the community, economic, and workforce development fields since 1998. As a former *Market Street* Project Manager, she led workforce and economic development strategy processes in



Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and North Carolina and also worked closely on projects in Arkansas, Indiana, Virginia, and West Virginia as researcher in her first two years with the firm. Kathy is the Director of Operations for the firm, and is one of *Market Street's* four Principals. She first joined *Market Street* in 2000 and manages each project's transition from initial planning to kick-off.

Kathy holds a master's degree in city planning from the Georgia Institute of Technology and a bachelor's degree in political science from Vanderbilt University. Prior to joining *Market Street*, she worked with The Nature Conservancy of Tennessee and in the organization's international headquarters. A native of Glynn County, Georgia, Kathy lives in Smyrna's Vinings Estates neighborhood with her husband and two young daughters, who attend Nickajack Elementary School.

JONATHAN MILLER

Smyrna Team Leader

Jonathan Miller brings strong facilitation and analytical skills to *Market Street Services*. With an interest in entrepreneurship and community and economic development marketing, he is able to help communities understand their competitive position and take strategic steps to develop a vision that is customized to the community's distinct culture, and identify actions that will improve the quality of life and key place-based factors that are critical to long-term success.

Prior to joining *Market Street*, Jonathan worked for Georgia Power, where he was part of the research team that fulfilled requests from local economic development partners, industrial prospects, and state-level economic development professionals. At *Market Street*, Jonathan has had a lead role in a wide range of projects, including Austin, Texas; Madison, Wisconsin; Pearland, Texas; Raleigh, North Carolina and Rome, Georgia. Jonathan is currently working with Greater Louisville, Inc. on the development of "Advantage Louisville," a regional economic development strategy and is the Team Leader for the firm's vision planning process in Fayette County, Georgia.

Jonathan holds a Master of Public Administration degree with a concentration in planning and economic development from the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University, and a bachelor's in public policy from Vanderbilt University.

Originally from Seattle, WA, Jonathan is a transplant but enjoys having four distinct seasons. This is especially true as he is an avid soccer player and enjoys fly-fishing (both of which are less fun in the rain). Jonathan is married to a native Atlantan (and attorney) and enjoys being a new homeowner.

MATTHEW TARLETON

Senior Manager, Research and Projects

Matt Tarleton joined *Market Street* in 2008 and currently serves as the firm's Senior Manager, Research and Projects and is one of the firm's four Principals. He has managed numerous strategic planning processes for a diverse array of client communities from the dynamic Raleigh-Durham region to the small town of Watertown, South Dakota, and from wine-country (Sonoma County, CA) to carpet country (Murray County, GA). Matt is involved in all of *Market Street's* projects in a research oversight role.



Matt earned his master's degree in applied economics from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and his bachelor's degree in economics with urban planning as a second major. Matt also spent time abroad at the London School of Economics. Matt has been a presenter at the Basic Economic Development Course at Georgia Tech and has spoken to various audiences on strategic planning for economic development and best practices in the management of economic development organizations.

A native of Raleigh, North Carolina, Matt enjoys spending time with family in the Research Triangle and along North Carolina's coast. He gained an appreciation for food and a love of cooking from his father, Jim, and spends much of his free time in the kitchen, creating a mess that no doubt pleases his new wife, Amy. When he isn't cooking or exercising he's usually checking the latest news from the wide world of sports.



FIRM EXPERIENCE

Market Street has the collective experience of working in a wide variety of communities, from large metropolitan regions and entire states, to smaller bedroom communities and rural towns. This depth and breadth of experience provides us with direct insight into how communities function best, how they recognize and fully leverage competitive advantages and niche opportunities, and how they ultimately succeed.

Additional project experience, case studies, and client references were provided in the Firm Questionnaire during the RFQu phase. Information about our Metro Atlanta experience and a list of similarly-sized client communities are provided below.

Metro Atlanta experience: In addition to our work facilitating two strategic planning processes for Cobb Travel & Tourism in 2010 and 2013, as well as the Cobb's Competitive EDGE process in 2011, our firm has facilitated strategic planning initiatives in the following Metro Atlanta communities: the City of Alpharetta, Clayton County, Cherokee County, DeKalb County, Douglas County, Gwinnett County (Partnership Gwinnett I & II), Henry County, the City of Snellville, Stone Mountain CID, and the 10-county Metro Atlanta region (Atlanta Regional Commission).

"Cobb Travel & Tourism worked with Market Street to conduct the first comprehensive hospitality-based research in our county in more than 20 years. That research informed an overall strategy and actionable implementation plan. Two years later, we act on those plans daily and continue to check off key accomplishments. Market Street was important to bringing stakeholders together and building consensus for our efforts. In fact, they were so skillful in all of those areas, we have hired them for another project."

Holly Bass, CEO, Cobb Travel & Tourism

Recent client communities of similar size

- Alpharetta, Georgia (City population 62,000, County population 977,000)
- Decatur-Morgan County, Alabama (City population 56,000, County population 120,000)
- Greenville, South Carolina (City population 60,000, County population 467,000)
- Pearland, Texas (City population 96,000, County population 325,000)
- Rome-Floyd County, Georgia (City population 36,000, County population 96,000)
- Snellville, Georgia (City population 19,000, County population 842,000)
- Vestavia Hills, Alabama (Population 34,000)
- Watertown, South Dakota (Population 21,000)

"Market Street was selected because of its experience and a proven process that could be inclusive of people, organizations and ideas. The team was sensitive to our circumstances but firm in their findings about our community's needs. We plan to continue our relationship with Market Street as we move forward."

Ben Haskew, President & CEO, Greenville Chamber of Commerce (South Carolina)



PROJECT COST

Market Street's fee schedule is based on the contracted deliverables and includes project management, research, and analysis. As previously noted, our budget assumes that a key staff person from the City will serve as a resource on a day-to-day basis and will assist in the collection of needed information and materials and primarily manage the coordination of stakeholder interview and focus group scheduling.

The process as outlined will cost \$130,000 plus actual expenses estimated at \$5,000 related to mileage reimbursement, meals, printing, proprietary data purchases and other reasonable and direct fees. Any out-of-pocket reductions the client can provide for printing, meals, or hotels can be deducted from this expense estimate.

Market Street believes that the process outlined in this proposal will best serve the needs of the City of Smyrna. However, at City's request, our project team can adjust specific components to better align with strategic goals and financial considerations.

The estimate for project costs is based on a number of criteria and assumptions outlined in the proposal, including the number of meetings, size of the Steering Committee, and level of involvement of senior and executive-level *Market Street* staff, among others. Alterations to these assumptions after the initiation of the project would require a contract addendum. This cost estimate is valid for 90 days. The proposed project timeline is valid for 30 days. Per the recommendation of City staff, our cost quotation includes a contingency fee that is roughly equal to an additional month of work or more in-depth research requests.



CONCLUSION

The time is right for the Smyrna community to define its vision for the future. There is much momentum to build on, as Smyrna has made serious investments in community assets, infrastructure, and critical quality of place amenities. There is a very real sense of community-building that can be felt everywhere from the Mayor's Education Award ceremonies to Food Truck Tuesdays at Taylor-Brawner Park. And yet, for the quality of life to continue to rise, and for the tax base to be strengthened and expanded, there is more work to be done.

The process outlined in this proposal seeks to help the City identify ways to develop the community's self-defined vision in a way that will inform the community and economic development decisions required to implement the community's vision. The final vision plan will result in a blueprint for Smyrna's future, one that is completely grounded in resident input. With many years of experience soliciting citizen input, building buy-in, and developing community consensus, *Market Street* can say with absolute confidence that the process outlined in this proposal will unite the community's residents, businesses, and elected and appointed leadership behind a single, cohesive vision for the future.

We consider it a privilege to be considered for this important task and look forward to discussing the next steps with Smyrna's leaders.