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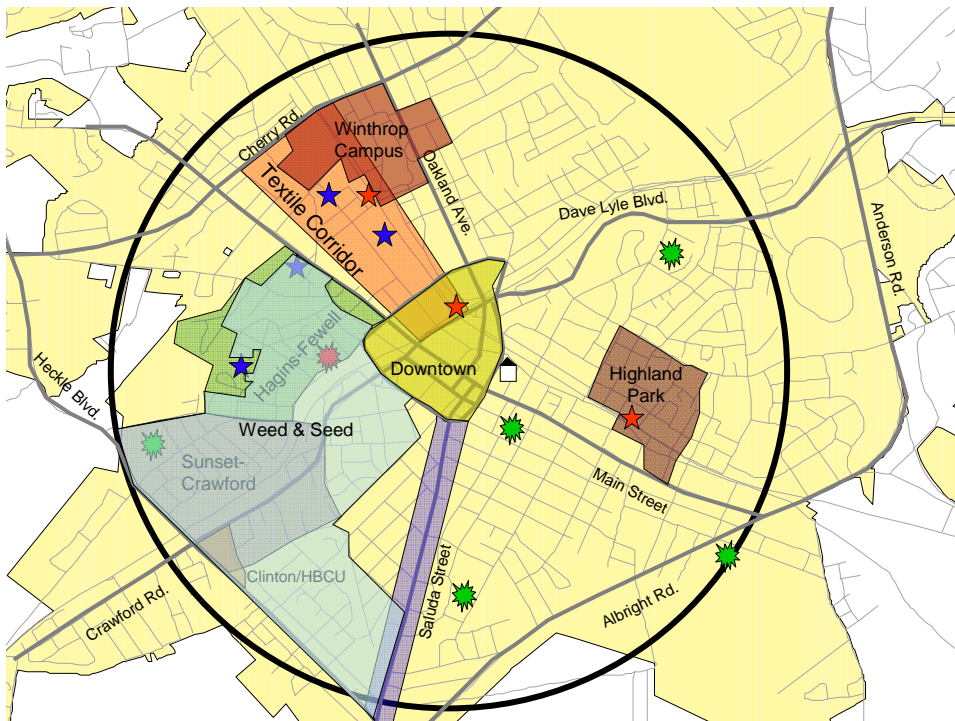
I. INTRODUCTION

The Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation (RHEDC) is seeking qualified firms to assist with strengthening the Old Town identity and messaging. With the equity that has been built in the seven years that the Old Town name and logo have been in use, RHEDC has chosen to continue the use of the name and logo. However, RHEDC recognizes the lack of continuity in terminology has created confusion. Additionally, Old Town does not have a clearly defined meaning or perception.

II. PROJECT FACTS

Background

Old Town encompasses approximately a mile-and-a-half radius around Downtown including Downtown itself, the Textile Corridor, Winthrop University and surrounding neighborhoods. These boundaries represent the original village of Rock Hill that was incorporated in 1892.



In 2001, the term Old Town was coined to collectively identify the historic areas of Rock Hill. As Rock Hill's foremost economic development goal became the redevelopment of Old Town, the creation of an Old Town Master Plan (see enclosure) was pursued. Guided by this Master Plan, a number of organizations have worked together and successfully made positive changes in Old Town. Original sponsoring partners were RHEDC, Rock Hill School District Three of York County, Winthrop University, York

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Technical College, City of Rock Hill, York County Regional Chamber of Commerce, and the York County Council.

The Old Town Master Plan includes six strategies for redevelopment: Downtown; College Town; Hometown (neighborhoods); Trolley Town (transportation); Textile Town (former textile mills); and, Technology Town.

The leader of this project was the Old Town Roundtable (OTR) whose membership categories included “designated” and “at large” members. Designated members represented a specific sponsoring organization. At large members were selected by the sponsoring organizations to represent the diverse interests of the community. Below was the OTR’s Statement of Purpose:

The Old Town Roundtable is a citizens’ advocacy group committed to using its influence as a catalyst for the sustained redevelopment of Rock Hill’s Old Town area. OTR’s primary purpose is to promote communication and cooperation between the sponsoring organizations, foster a sense of community interest in Old Town and provide a forum where member organizations can bring specific concerns for discussion, receive reliable information and support for legitimate causes. OTR furnishes a connecting link between the Old Town Master Plan and the elected and appointed officials and units of local government, businesses, citizens and non-profit groups who have a stake in the success of the area.

The OTR had five (5) standing committees to address the strategies of the Master Plan: Branding; Textile Corridor; Education; Downtown Action; and, Communications. Out of the five (5) committees only one (1) has continued to convene to this day. The Downtown Action Committee has evolved into the Main Streets of Old Town Association (MSOTA), a 501(c)(3), is a citizens group committed to the sustained redevelopment of Rock Hill’s Downtown area. Below is the MSOTA’s Statement of Purpose:

- Promote communication and cooperation between parties having an interest in Downtown
- Foster a sense of community interest in Downtown
- Provide a forum where people can bring specific concerns for discussion, receive reliable information and support for legitimate causes
- Furnish a connecting link between the Downtown Master Plan and local government, businesses, citizens and non-profit groups who have a stake in the success of the area
- Implement the goals and strategies outline in the Downtown Master Plan (see enclosure)

Although the OTR was disbanded, the MSOTA still meets on a monthly basis.

Strategic Planning

RHEDC has recognized the need for a direct organizational focus on Old Town since the OTR ceased meeting. Because of RHEDC's vested interest and involvement in revitalizing Downtown, RHEDC has chosen to pick up the pieces of progress that the OTR had made and take the next steps. In doing this, a RFP for creating a strategic plan was sent out in June of 2007.

In the Fall of 2007 the Lyerly Agency was hired to review and evaluate the way Rock Hill is marketed and to compile a Strategic Marketing Plan (see enclosure). Lyerly quickly realized that one of our biggest challenges when it comes to communicating with the public is the public's lack of understanding of the development process. Lyerly recognized the fact that many development projects take years to come to fruition; yet, the public – not understanding the lengthy development process – often becomes discouraged by the perceived delays.

As a proactive rather than a reactive approach to this challenge, Lyerly suggested that the public's attention needs to be redirected. In other words, Rock Hill's many successes need to be brought to the forefront on a regular basis in order for the public to become excited about the revitalization efforts that are on the horizon. Attention needs to be drawn to the many projects that are in progress, and the connections between these projects need to be made clear.

Since the Old Town Master Plan was adopted in 2001, many projects have been successfully completed such as the redevelopment of the Cotton Factory and the McCorry's building. However, the public is largely unaware that they are related; therefore, the public is not convinced that ongoing, large-scale progress is being made. Packaging these successes together can help identify the boundaries of Old Town and convince the public that Old Town is truly an asset of Rock Hill.

The strategies that Lyerly proposed are as follows:

1. Develop Identity and Messaging of Old Town as an Asset of Rock Hill
2. Develop Overall Community Awareness of Old Town
3. Gain Support for the Old Town Redevelopment Efforts
4. Develop Business Retention, Attraction and Recruitment Programs
5. Develop a true college town environment
6. Create and Solidify Marketing Partnerships and Alliances
7. Develop a Targeted Communications Approach to Capitalize on External Economic Development Leads and Opportunities
8. Develop a Realistic Scorecard of Achievements and a System of Reporting and Communicating Successes

Status of Implementation

The RHEDC Marketing Committee has facilitated the following progress:

1. Formal Presentation to RHEDC Board (*Completed 4/1/08*)
2. Conduct Stakeholder Meetings (*On-going*)
3. Approval of Plan by Marketing Committee (*Completed 4/29/08*)
4. Presentation and Approval of Plan - RHEDC Board (*Completed 5/6/08*)
5. Development of 7 Minute DVD Highlighting Developments and Projects in Old Town (*Completed 6/5/08*) (view at www.rockhillusa.com)
6. Video Presented at RHEDC Annual Meeting (*Completed 6/19/08*)
7. Presentation and Approval of Plan - City Council (*Completed 6/23/08*)
8. Approval of First-Year Goals (5) - RHEDC Board (*Completed 8/5/08*)

Since having received the Old Town Strategic Marketing Plan the RHEDC Marketing Committee has been reviewing the plan and working with Lyerly to establish a set of goals to be accomplished in the first year of the project. These goals are not in successive order except for the first.

1. Update and strengthen the Old Town identity. Reinforce the unique, historic character of the area. Ensure that prospects will recognize the enhanced value they will receive from investing in Old Town.
2. Produce a comprehensive public relations campaign that will consistently reinforce Old Town's value of investments to residents, home buyers, and business prospects.
3. Compile the resources needed to market Old Town's assets to business prospects.
4. Create marketing materials for recruiting investors, accomplishing business retention, as well as facilitating business growth and expansion.
5. Build a tactical plan that lays out timeframes for accomplishing the core strategies. This plan will be used as a reference guide that will ensure that the strategic plan accomplishes the City of Rock Hill's overall goal for the area – To Promote the Old Town Identity.

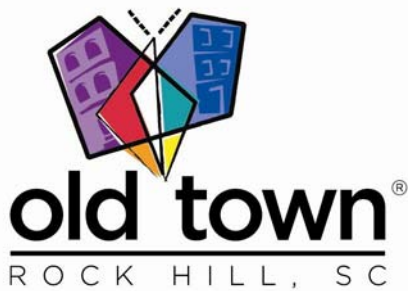
Challenges

Old Town is a large geographical area, defined to represent the older sections (pre-1950) of Rock Hill. The idea of this area as a distinct part of Rock Hill is new, a construct of the Old Town Master Plan. Old Town is not easily identified on the ground, the boundaries are somewhat fluid, and the area includes a broad mixture of neighborhoods, commercial corridors, old textile mills and Winthrop University. Often, people do not know whether they are part of Old Town or not. The connections between projects and activities in different parts of Old Town are not obvious. As a result, it has been very difficult to successfully communicate the successes of the Old Town area to the community and to build and sustain a sense of progress and momentum.

Old Town Identity and Messaging RFP

Downtown Rock Hill is the geographical and emotional heart of Old Town. It is the “there, there” of Old Town. Downtown is critical to the success of the Old Town strategy: it must exert strong gravity on surrounding neighborhoods in order for the Old Town identity to have meaning. “Downtown” has its own identity, based on more than a century of existence as Rock Hill’s business and cultural center. The geography of Downtown is limited, representing only a small portion of Old Town. Interestingly, the use of the Old Town identity is strongest in the Downtown area, where two different businesses, Old Town Bistro and Old Town Outfitters, have adopted the Old Town name.

The duality of the “Downtown” and “Old Town” identities has been a problem from the start. Seeking to avoid confusion and promote the supremacy of the Old Town identity, an attempt was made to rebrand Downtown as “The Main Streets of Old Town”. This rebranding effort was not implemented aggressively or consistently. Even if this rebranding had been more aggressively implemented, it is unlikely that a phrase like “Main Streets of Old Town” can replace “Downtown” in the public lexicon. As a result, there remains a confusing duality between Downtown and Old Town.



In a similar vein, there other neighborhoods and geographies within the Old Town area that have their own identities. For example, there is a strong redevelopment focus in an area known as “The Textile Corridor.” The Textile Corridor is a part of Old Town but the relationship of this related, but separate identity, has not been successfully communicated.



Old Town Identity and Messaging

The current Old Town logo was designed to convey a colorful, youthful identity for Old Town (in contrast to the original logo which featured a more traditional butterfly design). Beyond this logo design, however, there is no framework for communicating a consistent positive identity for the Old Town area to targeted audiences.

Markets

Old Town is comprised of historical and new sites that are marketed to small businesses and often are occupied by private organizations and offices. It is important for Old Town to attract business and private investment in order to have new money to refurbish buildings and revitalize Old Town; therefore, improving the perception. From a different perspective, Old Town must be marketed to those who live and work in Rock Hill who have not been supporting Old Town financially as consumers. Old Town must also be marketing regionally to attract new visitors. It is important to teach individuals that Old Town has the necessary elements for running businesses and providing entertainment and options for shopping and dining. The Old Town markets include the following:

1. Community identity: a unifying, positive identity for neighborhoods, businesses and institutions that may otherwise have no geographic identity or a negative identity associated with an older, declining part of the community
2. Project marketing to elected officials and community: a unifying theme for a wide range of intentional improvements and investments taking place within the Old Town geography – the Old Town Master Plan
3. Economic development marketing: a strong brand and identity that supports marketing efforts targeting new businesses, residents and developers
4. Consumer marketing for businesses in Old Town, particularly downtown: co-operative advertising ads, using the Shop Dine Unwind campaign logo, published in local full-color magazines (see enclosures)
5. Visitors



Branding

In Fall 2003 an Old Town logo was launched that was targeted towards young professionals from the creative class and was to appeal to stakeholders. The core target group was identified as talented, mobile knowledge workers (see enclosures).

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A lot of effort went into branding the Old Town logo. Banners, park benches, neighborhood signs, street signs, and trash receptacles were all made and strategically placed. Other branding pieces like gateways and way finding signage were designed but were never built and placed due to not getting funding approval from City Council.

When staff members changed, a lot of focus on the branding slowly lost its momentum. It was at that time that the OTR ceased meeting and the branding efforts halted.

III. ORGANIZATION LEADERSHIP

RHEDC Marketing Committee reports to the RHEDC Board and Council as well as City Council. Funding comes directly from RHEDC and the City of Rock Hill so it is necessary for approval when making decisions.

There is cross representation between the Marketing Committee and the MSOTA in order to minimize duplicate efforts when concerning downtown.

The RHEDC Marketing Committee is comprised of stakeholders from various areas of Old Town. Representation comes from:

- Innovative Computer Systems, Downtown Business, also on MSOTA Board
- Revenflo, Downtown Business, President of MSOTA Board
- Lavalla Maddox, Downtown Business, also on Promotions Committee of the MSOTA
- Old Town Outfitters, Downtown Business
- Williams & Fudge, Textile Corridor Business
- Public Affairs Department of the City of Rock Hill
- Housing and Neighborhood Services Department of the City of Rock Hill
- York County Economic Development Board
- Comporium Communications
- First Citizens
- Provident Community Bank

IV. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Proposals must include the following information, preferably in the following order:

Firm Credentials, Ownership, and History

Please provide the following information on the proposal cover page:

- Firm's name and mailing address
- Firm's current legal status: limited liability company, corporation, partnership, sole proprietor, etc.

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- Contact person's name, title, phone number, fax number and e-mail address
- Signature of authorized corporate officer for each entity proposing as a partnership or as a team

A brief narrative history of the firm or team should be provided on a separate page following the cover page.

Qualifications

The firm should provide an explanation of its identity and messaging experience. Please provide the project names and service(s) provided. State the measurements and results designating successes or failures in the project(s). Explain reactions for improvement if results were not satisfactory. Please include specific previous relevant experience with public entities, including references.

Explain why your firm is interested in assisting Rock Hill in communicating that Old Town is thriving. Give details as to how your firm can help expedite this growth. Detail the team's community knowledge of Rock Hill and individual project experience that may be related.

Project Proposal

RHEDC asks prospective consultants to share their vision for the Old Town identity and messaging stated in goal number one (1) of five (5). By using Lyerly's marketing plan and without abandoning the Old Town name and logo provide solutions for overcoming the noted challenges. Create a proposal that includes a budget and timeline for identity and messaging development. Explain what process your firm will undertake in order to accomplish the goal and prepare deliverables.

Explain your team's ability to assist in goals two (2) through five (5) in the anticipation of being requested.

1. **Update and strengthen the Old Town identity. Reinforce the unique, historic character of the area. Ensure that prospects will recognize the enhanced value they will receive from investing in Old Town.**
2. Produce a comprehensive public relations campaign that will consistently reinforce Old Town's value of investments to residents, home buyers, and business prospects.
3. Compile the resources needed to market Old Town's assets to business prospects.
4. Create marketing materials for recruiting investors, accomplishing business retention, as well as facilitating business growth and expansion.
5. Build a tactical plan that lays out timeframes for accomplishing the core strategies. This plan will be used as a reference guide that will ensure that the strategic plan accomplishes the City of Rock Hill's overall goal for the area – To Promote the Old Town Identity.

V. SELECTION PROCESS

Once the deadline has passed, staff will coordinate an interview time with selected firms and the RHEDC Marketing Committee. If needed, the Marketing Committee may create a short-list and seek further information and hold more detailed discussions to arrive at a firm selection.

Proposal Deadline

Proposals shall be delivered to the City of Rock Hill at the address listed below on or before: Friday, October 17, 2008, at 5:00 p.m. to the attention of:

Jami Wilson
Program Coordinator
City of Rock Hill
P.O. Box 11706
Rock Hill, SC 29731

Proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted. It is neither the City's nor RHEDC's responsibility nor practice to acknowledge receipt of any proposal. It is the prospective firm's responsibility to assure that a proposal is received in a timely manner.

General

Questions will be answered in the same manner submitted (mail, e-mail, fax). The staff contact person is the only individual who can be contacted about the RFP by applicants before the proposal deadline. Staff cannot vary the terms of the RFP.

Budget

A maximum of \$20,000 has been reserved for the completion of this project. Certain funds in this budget must be earmarked for ongoing counseling.

Payment Terms

Please explain your firm's payment terms. It is RHEDC's preference to handle a fee-for-service contract. The Marketing Committee takes the lead in directing the project and may find it necessary at times to make adjustments in needed services.

Contact

Inquires of interpretation or additional information can be made as needed up to ten (10) days before the date specified for submission for proposals. Applicants may only direct questions by mail, e-mail, or fax (no phone calls, please) to the staff person listed below:

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Jami Wilson
Program Coordinator
City of Rock Hill
P.O. Box 11706
Rock Hill, SC 29731
E-mail: jwilson@cityofrockhill.com
Fax: (803) 329-7007

Submittal Requirements

Applicants must submit copies of their proposals as follows: one (1) unbound copy, three (3) bound copies and one electronic version in Microsoft compatible or PDF format on a CD or via e-mail (to jwilson@cityofrockhill.com). Proposals must be on standard 8 ½" x 11" paper. All supporting documentation must be on paper no larger than 11" x 17". Faxed proposals will not be accepted. Applicants may choose to provide additional copies if and when invited to do so for presentation purposes. Submissions will not be returned.

All proposals must be valid for a period of ninety (90) days after opening. Firms shall be prepared to meet with city staff/representatives to discuss any portion of their proposal before a decision is made concerning responses to this RFP. Firms responding will be responsible for any costs associated or incurred in preparing or responding to the RFP.

Timeline

Following is the anticipated timeline:

Submission deadline for proposals	Friday, October 17, 2008
Review/evaluation of proposals	October 20 through October 24, 2008
Interview process	October 27 through October 31, 2008
Project Deadline*	February 2009

* The date can better be determined once the selected firm decides the process they will undergo in completing the project.