



## DRAFT PROPOSAL: GRAND ISLAND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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*Cover photos sourced from the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce and the Grand Island Convention and Visitors Bureau limited to uses associated with this proposal.*

## INTRODUCTION

In anticipation of burgeoning community growth, a resulting tight labor market, and an uncertain global and national economic climate, Grand Island Area leaders have embarked upon a proactive five-year holistic economic development endeavor. This five-year initiative seeks to secure a sustainable workforce for local businesses, enhance the community's capacity to expand existing businesses and attract new investments and opportunities, and advance entrepreneurship and small business development. Though Grand Island has emerged from the Great Recession in a better position than many of its peer communities throughout the nation, there is no doubt that the only certainty in the Post-Great Recession economy is uncertainty. Today's economic climate requires new thinking for the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber), the Grand Island Area Economic Development Corporation (EDC), the Grand Island Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), and other local partners.

Whether it is the City of Grand Island's past and upcoming visioning process, the Grand Island Redevelopment Study, Grand Island's activities to obtain the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Entitlement Community designation, or this five-year inclusive effort, Grand Island has shown eagerness and capacity to chart its desired future. However, each effort must not occur independently. Grand Island leaders must come together to coordinate implementation and investment in order to maximize resources.

Identifying *how* the five-year economic development initiative is implemented as well as *who* should lead implementation efforts – be they individual organizations or new partnerships – is just as critical as identifying *what* the Grand Island Area must do to foster continued prosperity. Along with embarking upon a holistic strategy, fostering a cooperative strategic planning environment will pave the way for long-term operational collaboration.

The process that *Market Street* has outlined in this proposal represents the ideal next step for the Grand Island Area to take toward securing sustainable economic opportunity for all its residents and businesses. It will allow Grand Island leaders to build on and improve its existing community and economic development programs by examining its own competitive dynamics and drawing on best practices from other successful communities.

The proposed scope of services will allow the Grand Island leadership to explore in-depth the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. At the same time, the process provides an opportunity to assess the full range of organizational and programmatic structures within the three convening organizations (Chamber, EDC, and CVB), understanding that the functions of each organization are important and that they all support community and economic development.

## SCOPE OF WORK

In order to develop a holistic, comprehensive Business Development Strategy, we propose an eight-month process that includes three serious research phases followed by the creation of a detailed, action-oriented Strategy and thorough Implementation Plan that will guide strategic partnership, economic development investment, and community development activities in the Grand Island Area over the next five years. The steps required to complete this process are outlined on the following pages.

### *Steering Committee*

At *Market Street*, we believe that our role is to provide the very best research and facilitation that is available, yet the key decisions related to the final Strategy and its components must be made by Grand Island's community volunteer leadership. *Market Street* recommends that the Steering Committee consist of 20 to 25 individuals and will help outline a process for identifying potential Steering Committee members during the first project initiation conference call.

This group 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 crucial 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: visionaries and leaders in the community ("super citizens"); business leaders (large and small employers); civic leaders; educational leaders (K-12 and higher education); social service and non-profit leaders; public sector representatives; elected officials; faith-based representatives; media representatives; and representatives of other organizations key to implementation.

The responsibilities of the Steering Committee will be to:

- Trust the process;
- Put the needs of Grand Island ahead of personal and business interests;
- Be a consensus builder and keep the "big picture" in focus;
- Attend and actively participate in meetings over the course of the process;
- Share knowledge of Grand Island's strengths and weaknesses with *Market Street*;
- Invest the time needed to review draft reports and be prepared to discuss the deliverables;
- 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 consult with the Steering Committee to keep the process on track and verify key issues. The project will include seven committee meetings, sequenced around presentation of project deliverables, with *Market Street* facilitating the meetings. We recommend the inclusion of a **Technical Advisory Group (TAG)** consisting of key staff members from the three convening organizations and relevant departments at the City and Hall County. TAG members would observe Steering Committee meetings, review and contribute to research documents, and support the efforts of the Steering Committee.

### **Familiarization Tour and Project Initiation**

The project will kick off with a full-day community familiarization tour of Grand Island by *Market Street* staff. Planning for the community visit will begin immediately, with a project initiation conference call between Grand Island leaders and the *Market Street* staff to make a series of preliminary decisions that will set the rest of the process in motion. Potential discussion topics during the project initiation conference call include assistance with populating the Steering Committee and communications strategy development highlighted in the subsequent section. A detailed agenda will be provided, and following the call, the next several weeks will allow for key decisions to be made, including how to best craft messages and talking points regarding the differences between this process and the City's visioning process.

The community visit can be held at the beginning of the project team's first trip to Grand Island (which will also include the Steering Committee kickoff meeting and Stakeholder Input sessions). This visit – similar to a familiarization tour provided to business prospects – will give the client the opportunity to present Grand Island community assets, facilities, amenities, and destinations to the *Market Street* team. Areas of interest might include Downtown Grand Island, Platte Valley Industrial Park, Cornhusker Industrial Park, Energy Park, and the Central Nebraska Regional Airport, the Grand Theatre, Bartenbach Galleries, Heartland Events Center, Merchandise Mile, South Locust District, and Central Community College. This initial trip will ensure that the *Market Street* team gains first-hand exposure to community assets that may be discussed in interviews and focus groups and analyzed as components of the Competitive Assessment.

## **PROJECT MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

In addition to the deliverables detailed above, *Market Street* offers project management services that support and facilitate a smooth, functioning process and provide additional value to the sponsoring organizations and the Grand Island community as a whole. These services are built into our approach, and bring to Grand Island's leaders successful, time-tested techniques for managing each phase and addressing challenges that may arise during the process.

The following list highlights several components of our project management services:

- **Steering Committee Assistance:** Along with ensuring that the Steering Committee is populated with potential implementation partners and others that may not always be “at the table” when needed, *Market Street* can also develop Steering Committee job descriptions. A job description and “letter of commitment” as well as draft invitation letters can be provided which are useful in explaining the role of the Steering Committee and differentiating between Steering Committee members, co- or tri-chair leadership positions, and TAG staff.
- **Communications Strategy:** At the outset of the process, *Market Street* staff can help hone a robust communications strategy that introduces the process to core stakeholders and implementation partners as well as clarify differences between past or current strategic planning efforts within the community.
- **Steering Committee Planning Sessions and Agendas:** Before each Steering Committee meeting, *Market Street* staff can draft an agenda for the meeting well in advance. The agenda will help set expectations for the meeting and will be discussed with process leadership prior to the meetings.
- **Post-Meeting Debrief Calls:** After each Steering Committee meeting, *Market Street* staff can host a conference call with the Chamber, its partners, and Steering Committee co-chairs to discuss any questions or concerns that arose during Steering Committee discussions, research and strategic deliverable presentations, or other current events that may ultimately impact implementation success.
- **Media Interviews:** *Market Street* CEO J. Mac Holladay is available to respond to inquiries and/or can assist with the development of speaking points for Steering Committee and key staff leaders. Our team can also be available after Steering Committee meetings as needed for media interviews or press briefings.

## Phase 1: Competitive Assessment

The Competitive Assessment will provide a detailed examination of Grand Island’s competitiveness as a place to live, work, visit, and do business. The Assessment will provide a clear analysis of both advantages and challenges. During this phase, the *Market Street* team will evaluate both quantitative and qualitative data as well as previous research conducted by the EDC, Chamber, and CVB, among others. Our process will also be informed by existing plans and studies such as the Grand Island Redevelopment Study, the Grand Island Five Year Housing Action Plan, the City of Grand Island’s 2011 ICMA Survey, findings from the City of Grand Island’s visioning process, the Metropolitan Planning Organization Unified Planning Work Program, the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Grand Island, the Hall County Comprehensive Plan, and research related to Grand Island’s efforts to receive HUD Entitlement Community designation. Our Assessment will take this informative, baseline data a step further by expanding the universe of data and by benchmarking Grand Island against three carefully-selected national peer and aspirational communities, the state of Nebraska, and the United States.



In addition to describing trends for a variety of data points, the Competitive Assessment will synthesize findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis to frame the discussion around the leading “stories” and competitive issues facing the community. This approach is intended to produce a resource that does not simply identify key points but uses them to determine strategic implications for the community.

**GEOGRAPHY**

*Hall County, Nebraska will be used as the principal geography for the Competitive Assessment. For select indicators, Market Street will utilize the four county metropolitan statistical area of Hall, Hamilton, Howard and Merrick counties to provide the most valuable and recent data available regarding the labor shed and economic region. While it is understood that the Tri-City area is an existing market, the MSA will provide more robust data for much of the analyses. These indicators include employment by industry, employment by occupation, labor shed, and commute shed data. In addition, the Target Sector Analysis will also utilize the metropolitan area as its principle geography.*

**An Analysis of Grand Island’s “People, Place, and Prosperity”**

Market Street will analyze indicators to assess the community’s competitiveness across a wide variety of areas. The final list of indicators to be examined by the Market Street team will be developed once a more comprehensive understanding of the issues facing the Grand Island community is gleaned from introductory research and qualitative input. Our firm’s commitment to holistic community and economic development strategic planning ensures that the Assessment will answer key questions about Grand Island’s **People**, the community as a **Place**, and economic structure issues that affect Grand Island’s long-term **Prosperity**. The following sections describe **People**, **Place**, and **Prosperity** in further detail, providing potential indicators along with **example** stories that may present themselves from data trends identified during the research phase.

**People: How is Grand Island growing and changing?**

This section of the report will address how the community is growing and changing and will reveal how residents are doing, using demographic and social characteristics. Underpinning Grand Island’s overall socioeconomic wellbeing is the ability of its workers to generate personal wealth. Market Street will assess where roadblocks to personal wealth generation are still prevalent and where progress has been made through an analysis of various indicators, potentially including:

<b>People: Indicators</b>	Population growth	<b>Example Stories</b>	<i>Talent Pipeline: Implications of the Baby Boom Retirement for Grand Island</i>
	Age composition		<i>Grand Island’s Population Growth and Continued Change</i>
	Racial/ethnic composition		<i>Grand Island’s Educational Attainment: Impact on Household Wellbeing</i>
	Educational attainment		
	Income and poverty		

To add further context, the following indicators may contain figures for the region: total population, age composition, race and ethnic composition and growth, educational attainment, students eligible for free or reduced price lunch, per capita income, and labor force participation, among others.

**Place: How “livable” is Grand Island?**

Even in today’s economy, it is not unusual for the most highly skilled U.S. workers to pick where they want to live first and find a job second, which represents a major shift in domestic workforce dynamics. Therefore, economically competitive places are those that offer a high quality of life experience capable of attracting and retaining residents and workers and that provide the necessary infrastructure to accommodate desirable business growth. As recognized in the RFP, the ability to attract and retain young professionals and future (and current) entrepreneurs is a critical aspect of the community’s long-term success. Quality of place and options related to cultural and other community amenities can significantly influence the strength of talent attraction and entrepreneurship programs. *Market Street* will assess various factors of quality of place and infrastructure in the community. Potential indicators could include:

<b>Place: Indicators</b>	Home prices	<b>Example Stories</b>	<i>Quality of Place: Lifestyle Options and Considerations for Young Professionals</i>
	Housing composition		<i>Commuting Patterns and the Grand Island Area’s Workforce</i>
	Commuting trends		<i>Public Safety and Health: Personal Wellbeing in Grand Island</i>
	Community amenities		
	Public safety		
	Air and rail service capacity		

The following indicators may be assessed at the regional level: workforce flows by income, age, and industry; travel time to work; means of transportation to work; airport capacity (including passenger and flights totals); and personal and public safety factors, among others.

**Prosperity: How is the community’s economy growing and changing?**

*Market Street* will assess the realities of the Grand Island economy, including an analysis of its current economic structure as well as employment dynamics since the Great Recession. *Market Street* will analyze Grand Island’s economic conditions to determine where jobs have been added and lost. Specific indicators could include:



Prosperity: Indicators	Employment	Example Stories	<i>Great Recession Weathered: Navigating an Uncertain Economic Climate</i>
	Unemployment		
	Economic structure and diversity		<i>A Tax Incentive Review: Grand Island's Competitiveness</i>
	Labor force participation		
	State and local tax incentives review		<i>Succeeding in the New Economy: Grand Island's Innovation and Entrepreneurship Capacity</i>

*The following indicators may be analyzed at the regional level for greater context: total employment, employment by industry, earnings by industry, employment by occupation, earnings by occupation, self-employment by industry, and self-employment by occupation.*

**Methodology**

As noted, our team will use Hall County, Nebraska as the principle geography but will also integrate data for the region (Hall, Hamilton, Howard, and Merrick counties) as a secondary geography to illustrate particularly important differences between Hall County and the broader region. The most recently available reputable and reliable private, non-profit, local, state, and national public data sources will be leveraged, with every effort made to match methodologies and units of comparison across sources to provide the most accurate and informative analysis of Grand Island's economy. Primary data sources include the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).

*Market Street* will work with Grand Island community leaders and community and economic development partners, including the City of Grand Island, the City of Hastings, the City of Kearney, the Grand Island Conventions and Visitors Bureau, the Grand Island Area Economic Development Corporation, Central Community College, Hastings College, and the University of Nebraska at Kearney to obtain local data as needed and available.

*In contrast, the Target Sector Analysis (as discussed in Phase 2) will utilize the Grand Island region as its principle geography. Along with assessing Grand Island's competitiveness for particular industry sectors (6-digit NAICS code level); targets will also be assessed for their viability at the regional level while highlighting trends and strategic implications for Hall County.*

## STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Critical to the success of this strategic planning process is the inclusion of stakeholders in the development of the core tenets and priorities of the Strategy. *Market Street* has had success involving key constituencies in its client communities, using a variety of different methods to facilitate discussion, solicit input, and build community consensus.

The development discussion topics and questions will be informed by feedback previously gathered by the the EDC, Chamber, CVB, and other partners, including the City of Grand Island.

- **Focus groups and interviews:** *Market Street* will conduct two days of input during the week of the project kickoff meeting, including 10-12 interviews and 8-10 focus groups. This represents what we perceive as the minimum input necessary to adequately inform the research and strategic planning phases.

Ideal interview candidates are key business leaders, elected officials, regional and state economic development partners, representatives from the education community, Chamber Connectors, the Chamber's Young Professional Organization members, Convention and Visitor Bureau board members, Grand Island Area Economic Development Corporation's advisory members and elected trustees, and other community stakeholders. Focus group categories could include small business owners and entrepreneurs, large employers, K-12 educators, higher education representatives from the community, young professionals, community and economic development professionals, innovation leaders, and elected and/or appointed officials. The appropriate schedule, balance, and composition of the interviews and focus groups will be determined during the project initiation call.

- **Online survey:** *Market Street* would also develop and host an online survey that would be open to residents, employers, and implementation partners throughout the Grand Island Area. The survey could be promoted using a variety of outreach methods, including email distribution lists, social media tools, local media outlets, and partnerships with local service providers and business establishments. *Market Street* would work with the client to identify the most useful and cost-effective publicity.
- **Project website:** Finally, our team recommends that a project website be developed to allow all stakeholders full access to the process and key deliverables once the Steering Committee has approved these deliverables for public distribution. Alternatively, one of the convening organizations may instead choose to use its own website to host a microsite focused on this process. The project website provides an ideal location for the survey to be prominently promoted. For an example of a current *Market Street* provided website, please see [maconbibbedstrategy.com](http://maconbibbedstrategy.com).

## Phase 2: Target Sector Analysis

Communities across the country are pursuing economic development strategies that seek to support the development of agglomerations of related business and institutions that can benefit from co-location and leverage the unique assets and advantages that the communities have to offer. Our Target Sector Analysis will identify those sectors of economic activity within Grand Island and the larger metropolitan economy that can drive future growth and wealth creation given the presence of existing assets that make the community a desirable location for such activities. Special consideration will be given to those industries that have the highest potential for diversification and lead to high-wage opportunities for workers in the Grand Island Area.

Understanding that Grand Island leaders desire a regional approach to target development, our team will seek to precisely define regional targets including the articulation of specific sub-sectors and potential avenues for economic diversification and entrepreneurship. *Market Street* will confirm the viability of these regional targets for Hall County specifically.

### *Market Street's approach and key concepts*

In the field of economic development, there are many methods used to identify economic development targets; however, many are based on incomplete or strictly industry-focused (business-sector-focused) methodologies. Such approaches ignore a variety of important issues from workforce attributes to educational assets to geographic advantages, all of which are vital to businesses. *Market Street's* approach to target identification is rooted in an examination of the region's workforce – the occupations and types of knowledge that support the region's business activities – as opposed to strictly focusing on business sector composition and growth. This "bottom up" approach stands in contrast to the traditional "top down" approach long utilized in cluster identification and analysis; it recognized the ever-increasing importance of talent and workforce sustainability to the business community. It is complemented by an evaluation of the region's business climate, infrastructure, research assets, educational programs, and many other items that factor into site location decisions for specific types of business activity.

The research related to business sector and occupational composition conducted for this phase of the process will be based on analysis of trends observed in the Grand Island Area. However, consideration will also be given to proximate assets located outside of the Grand Island Area as well.

Strategic implications are the focus of the Target Sector Analysis. Findings afford Grand Island greater insight into the regional economy as well as considerations for furthering cluster development. Strategic implications evolve from core concepts examined within the Analysis itself. These concepts are detailed as follows:

- **Talent Pipeline:** *Market Street* will assess the age composition of the local and regional workforce to clearly identify those occupations supporting each target sector that are most susceptible to impending retirements. Our team will also examine local wage dynamics, educational and training programs, and other attributes of the talent pipeline to clearly determine

which occupations are best suited for talent development, talent retention, or talent attraction strategies.

- **Inter-Industry Purchases:** Data covering inter-industry purchases provides tremendous insight into the degree to which firms benefit from co-location. These data capture business to business purchasing activity in over 800 industry sectors. By examining the percentage of a sector's requirements (expenditures) that are satisfied within the community (the Grand Island Area), it is possible to determine areas of expenditure leakage. For example, inter-industry data would determine the total expenditure leakage caused when the manufacturing sector sources intermediate goods from outside the region.
- **Economic Impact Analysis:** Along with defining potential leakage caused by local companies sourcing their goods and services from external supplies, the Target Sector Analysis will also project the potential impact (measured in jobs) for recapturing this lost economic activity. Such data can inform potential local sourcing or import substitution strategies that can result in the development of mature economic clusters.
- **Exports:** *Market Street* will determine export levels for more than 800 detailed industry sectors to identify those sectors that may have greater export potential and could benefit from international trade development strategies.

## METHODOLOGY

The Target Sector Analysis will present a variety of data points covering concepts such as business sector employment composition, wages, establishments, occupational composition, workforce demographics, exports, inter-industry expenditures, job openings, and degree completions. All of the aforementioned quantitative data is sourced from Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI), an industry-leading provider of proprietary data, aggregated from public sources such as the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the National Center for Education Statistics, CareerBuilder, and many others. EMSI was acquired by CareerBuilder in 2012.

## Phase 3: Marketing Review

An analysis of the Chamber, the Grand Island Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Grand Island Area Economic Development Corporation's community and economic development marketing efforts will complement the target sector research by confirming the viability of existing programs and identifying potential enhancements to future efforts. Our team will work closely with staff from each organization to gain a full understanding of the overall marketing process.

This internal review will serve as the cornerstone for further discussions among community leaders regarding shared marketing strategies. Such messaging will communicate effective economic development embodying a holistic approach that is inclusive of existing business retention and expansion,

entrepreneurship development, workforce training and education, and talent retention and recruitment among other factors.

Using best-practice methodologies and our expertise in community, economic, and workforce development, *Market Street* will review current marketing efforts spearheaded by the Chamber, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Economic Development Corporation. The review will include an assessment of these three organization's respective websites to gauge their effectiveness as a marketing tool, with specific consideration of appearance, content, effectiveness, isolating potential efficiencies and synergies between marketing efforts, and utility for external audience information gathering, and data collection. There will also be a review of advertising and collateral materials, inbound/outbound marketing events, public relations, trade shows, site location professional visits, and branding and identify-building efforts.

Coupled with key findings of the Competitive Assessment and Target Sector Analysis, *Market Street* will leverage the principal takeaways of the Marketing Review to directly inform development of key components of the Business Development Strategy.

## Phase 4: Business Development Strategy

The Business Development Strategy serves as the blueprint for ensuring that the Chamber and its partners will be able to fulfill its commitment to promote local commerce, advocate business perspectives, create and maintain relevant programs, attract young professionals to the Grand Island Area, and establish relationships in the Grand Island Area. It will also be a **holistic strategy**, with tactical, measurable, and actionable details that will serve as the Chamber and its partners program of work.

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

**Review of Key Findings from Previous Deliverables and Input:** The basis of the Strategy will emerge from the prioritized targets, existing plans, quantitative research, and stakeholder input. Issues and opportunities identified serve as the framework to match potential strategies for economic development.

**Draft Business Development Strategy:** The draft Strategy will include suggested goals for each key issue area, developed with close guidance from the Steering Committee. Potential objectives and action steps for each goal area will be discussed and explored. The draft will be inclusive of all recommended actions that the research determines are necessary for Grand Island to maximize its potential related to quality economic growth and diversification. These recommendations will be informed by existing plans, research, and extensive stakeholder and Steering Committee input.

While it would be a disservice to the process to attempt to anticipate the variety of strategic recommendations that will be included in the Strategy, our holistic approach will ensure that the following topics will be discussed as options:

- Business retention and expansion programs
- Entrepreneur programs
- Small business support
- Tourism opportunities
- Regional marketing collaborations
- Downtown development
- Quality of life enhancements
- Infrastructure and transportation needs
- Workforce development initiatives
- Support for educational partners

**Best Practice Recommendations:** *Market Street* will supplement the Business Development Strategy with best practice examples from across the nation that further explains individual components of the strategy. These best practices showcase what trailblazers in the field are doing in order to demonstrate what is possible and can serve as a catalyst for conversation and excitement about how the Chamber and its partner organizations may develop their own best-practice approaches.

**Intensive Steering Committee feedback:** Before the draft Strategy 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 goal of being visionary and bold.

- After the draft Strategy meeting, Steering Committee members will be asked to complete an **online survey** related to the draft Strategy's recommendations, the degree to which they support the recommendations, and how they should be prioritized.
- *Market Street* will use these survey results to identify areas of consensus and disagreement according to standard deviation. These results will be combined with input gathered during the draft Strategy meeting resulting in a final Strategy that encapsulates the Steering Committee's vision.
- During the meeting, PowerPoint-compatible **TurningPoint interactive voting devices** will be used to further spur conversation.

**Final Strategy:** The Final Strategy will incorporate the feedback provided by the Steering Committee and the best practices previously described.

During Steering Committee meetings, the *Market Street* team will structure the agenda to maximize engagement - further soliciting the Committee's feedback throughout the process. Facilitation strategies may entail breakout groups or surveys that ask the Committee to consider some initial implementation issues. For example, the Committee may begin discussing relevant implementation partners, identify



priorities to support implementation timelines, define performance metrics, and brand the strategy and other external marketing efforts. Gathering feedback is crucial to generate buy-in from the Steering Committee who will ideally transition into an Implementation Committee at the processes conclusion.

## Phase 5: Implementation Plan

*Market Street* believes that when the strategic planning process is complete, the real work begins. We do not plan for the sake of planning or create strategies designed to sit on a shelf. Providing guidance for timely and effective implementation is one of our core tenets.

As “change agents,” the EDC, Chamber, and CVB must be inspired by the Strategy. However, they also must have a blueprint to activate the Strategy’s objectives on a day-by-day, month-by-month, and year-by-year basis until the goals are achieved. While the three convening organizations will lead implementation, it will take the complete universe of community partners, and potentially some regional partners, to effectively activate the Strategy’s multiple activities. Tactical action steps that concern key elements like workforce quality, infrastructure capacity, quality of life and quality of place amenities, public safety, and other issues will require “a team effort.” **The importance of the Implementation Plan cannot be undersold, and this part of the process cannot simply be an afterthought during the Strategy phase.** If the strategy represents *what* Grand Island community leadership needs to do, the Implementation Plan determines *how* to do it. Two full meetings are dedicated to the creation of the Implementation Plan.

The Implementation Plan will serve the dual purpose of both operationalizing the Grand Island Business Development Strategy and aligning the organizational structure and operations of the Chamber and its partners with the Strategy. The Implementation Plan will identify organizations best suited to engage and carry out particular portions of the Strategy, while also acknowledging that overlapping activities, when combined, can be greater than the sum of their individual parts. As such, the Plan will serve as the “road map” for community and economic development organizations within the Grand Island Area. Key components of the Implementation Plan will inform the partnerships required and progress-tracking tools necessary for the EDC, Chamber, and CVB to coordinate strategic implementation. These components include:

- **Capacity and Budget Considerations:** *Market Street* will assess the community’s existing capacity to lead implementation of the Strategy, using previous interviews and ongoing discussions with staff and volunteer leaders. This will be inclusive of both funding and personnel dynamics needed to successfully carry the lead implementing organizations through the five-year cycle of the Strategy. Based on the findings of the research phase and the subsequent feedback, *Market Street* will assist in determining how to best mitigate resource or staff capacity issues.
- **Measurement Tools:** The Implementation Plan will include benchmarks and performance measures that will enable leaders and partners to track the progress of implementation and goal attainment. Each goal area will have activity measures and longer-term performance measures.

- **Performance measures** include specific indicators that reflect the effectiveness of the Strategy, such as per capita income, share of residents with a four-year college degree, poverty rates, average annual wages, commuting times, or other data-driven, objective gauges of regional progress.
- **Activity measures** include actions to pursue and track while implementing the Strategy. Examples include the number of recruitment leads generated from business retention and expansion visits, the creation of target marketing plans, and the number of small business owners and entrepreneurs assisted.
- **Action Plans:** *Market Street* will assist with the prioritization of key action steps for the first year of implementation. These activities will include some “quick wins” and the start of certain long-term efforts. A detailed action plan will also be created for year one and years two through five of implementation. The Action Plans will include recommendations for estimated launch and completion date of the activity, lead and support implementation entities, and, for some actions, potential cost to implement. The detailed Action Plans will help the lead implementation partners operationalize the Strategy on a daily basis and provide for seamless transition from planning to action.

*Market Street* will also work with the EDC, the Chamber, the CVB to determine the communications protocols that will best advance the initial outreach and consensus-building for the Grand Island Business Development Strategy. This includes the potential development of press releases, Speaker’s Bureau PowerPoint presentations, and an Executive Summary brochure highlighting the plan’s key recommendations and activities.

# PROJECT TIMELINE

As previously noted, our team will hold regular planning calls with Steering Committee leadership and TAG staff leaders. These calls allow the group to review progress and assess the need for any minor adjustments to the process that might be needed based on unforeseen issues and circumstances that might arise during the course of the process.

PROPOSED TIMELINE		Month 1					Month 2					Month 3				Month 4				Month 5					Month 6				Month 7				Month 8				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Phase 1: Competitive Assessment</b>	Project initiation planning, messaging, and communication/alignment with City visioning process	TC																																			
	Market Street team in the community for familiarization tour and staff interviews																																				
	Steering Committee Meeting to kickoff process; Stakeholder Input																																				
	Research and analysis																																				
	Online survey																																				
	Steering Committee Meeting to discuss findings																																				
<b>Phase 2: Target Sector Analysis</b>	Data analysis and development of deliverable																																				
	Steering Committee meeting to discuss findings																																				
<b>Phase 3: Marketing Review</b>	Data analysis and development of deliverable																																				
	Steering Committee meeting to discuss findings																																				
<b>Phase 4: Business Development Strategy</b>	Development of strategic recommendations																																				
	Steering Committee meeting to discuss draft deliverable																																				
	Revisions																																				
	Steering Committee meeting to discuss final Strategy																																				
<b>Phase 5: Implementation Plan</b>	Development of Guidelines																																				
	Steering Committee meeting to discuss draft deliverable																																				
	Revisions																																				
	Steering Committee meeting to discuss final Plan																																				

M=On-site meeting  
TC=Teleconference meeting

## FIRM AND TEAM EXPERIENCE

*Market Street Services, Inc.* was founded in 1997 as an alternative to the traditional community and economic development consulting firm. The company's experience and perspective is firmly rooted in the knowledge gained from being practitioners in the field, rather than looking "from the outside in." The firm's founder and CEO, J. Mac Holladay has more than 30 years of experience in community and economic development, both as a Chamber professional and as state economic development director. *Market Street's* staff has worked with clients throughout the country to devise measurable, achievable strategies and also have first-hand experience in clarifying what is needed from an organizational standpoint to successfully implement those strategies.

*Market Street* has worked in over 150 communities and 33 states since 1997. Our team has facilitated strategic planning processes for many of the nation's best-practice economic development organizations, including all three Opportunity Austin economic development strategies, three iterations of the Rome-Floyd 20/20 strategy process, and the last two five-year strategies for Nashville, Tennessee; Gwinnett County, Georgia; Montgomery, Alabama; Hopkinsville-Christian County, Kentucky; and Waco, Texas.

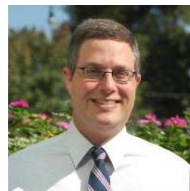
One quality that distinguishes *Market Street* from the field of consultants is the team that we have developed over the years. Our staff consists of 11 professionals who have a combined 60 years of experience at *Market Street*. We are a dedicated group of people fully committed to the work of economic and community development. Full bios for the proposed team follow.



J. Mac Holladay, CCE, PCED  
CEO/Founder



Kathy Young  
Director of Operations



Alex Pearlstein  
Director of Projects



Matthew Tarleton  
Senior Manager, Research & Projects



Christa Tinsley Spaht  
Project Manager



James G. Vaughan, Jr., CCE  
Senior Fellow



Ranada Robinson  
Senior Project Associate



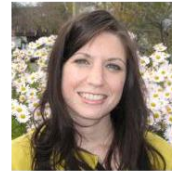
Jonathan Miller  
Project Manager



Evan Robertson  
Project Associate



Alexia Alvey  
Operations Manager



Stephanie Allen  
Project Assistant

## Project Experience

*Market Street* has the collective experience of working in a wide variety of communities, which 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. Our client communities are...

**Economic development success stories**—Austin, Texas; Nashville, Tennessee; and Little Rock, Arkansas not only consistently appear at the top of national rankings, but they have diversified and strengthened their economies and created a framework for long-term sustainability.

**Recognized by their peers**—Tulsa, Oklahoma; Gwinnett County, Georgia; and Springfield, Missouri are all recent Chambers of the Year, the pinnacle award bestowed by the American Chamber of Commerce Executives.

**Diverse in all aspects**—Our work has taken us to more than 150 communities in 33 states, ranging from Richmond, Virginia to Madison, Wisconsin; from Vestavia Hills, Alabama to Des Moines, Iowa; from Murray County, Georgia to Coachella Valley, California.

**Likely to ask us back**—Our firm is privileged to serve a growing list of repeat client communities, including Martinsville, Virginia; Rome, Georgia; Waco, Texas; Montgomery, Alabama; and Hopkinsville-Christian County, Kentucky, as well as the majority of the communities cited above.

As the national economic development sponsor for the American Chamber of Commerce Executives organization, *Market Street Services* brings to Grand Island insights and lessons learned from working with Chambers of Commerce and other economic development organizations including Convention and Visitor's Bureaus, Economic Development Corporations, and other economic development organizations. Examples from two recent client communities are highlighted below, which demonstrate the range of our assistance, and our recent experience in Nebraska. Full case studies that feature implementation outcomes for two other communities are provided in the following pages.

### **Cobb County Travel and Tourism**

Following the completion of our team's facilitation of the Cobb Chamber's EDGE Strategy, *Market Street* was then twice contracted by the former Cobb Visitors and Convention Bureau to assist with tourism-focused processes, resulting in the following deliverables:

- SWOT Analysis
- Organizational Action Plan
- Cobb Travel & Tourism\* Sports Facility SWOT Analysis

*\*The CVB rebranded following Market Street's Organizational Action Plan process*

### **The Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce**

*Market Street* was first engaged by the Chamber in 2012 to provide support for the organization's development of its strategic plan. Since that process, our team facilitated the Greater Omaha Young Professionals Board Retreat and served as the keynote speaker at the December 2013 regional meeting of the Omaha and Council Bluffs Chambers. The regional meeting drew more than 200 stakeholders from across state lines and is expected to lead to a cross-state economic development partnership.

## Conclusion

The Grand Island Chamber of Commerce, the Grand Island Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Grand Island Area Economic Development Corporation are taking a dynamic step to create a cohesive vision for the Grand Island Area. The existing processes currently underway – including the City’s visioning process, the community’s HUD Entitlement Community Designation, and the continued implementation of the various comprehensive plans within the region – provide a timely opportunity to develop an interconnected strategy to set a bold program of work in the community years.

This process will leverage past and concurrent efforts in a way that fully utilizes the knowledge that has already been gained but will look forward to create a high impact Business Development Strategy along with a detailed Implementation Plan to guide efforts, track progress, and efficiently align the Chamber, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Grand Island Area Economic Development Corporation’s community and economic development activities. Over the course of the eight-month process, new partnerships will be forged and relationships strengthened.

Our team includes experienced researchers and analysts, skilled facilitators, a senior staff with expertise in performing the complex work that is needed for developing and implementing viable community and economic development strategies.

We look forward to the opportunity to partner with the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce, the Grand Island Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Grand Island Area Economic Development Corporation in this process and will commit our team to the effort with the same high standards that we bring to all our work.