SMYRNA
GEORGIA

PHASE 3:

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

Submitted by Market Street Services Inc.
www.marketstreetservices.com

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MARKET ST

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PROJECT OVERVIEW: SMYRNA'S VISION

Working closely with City leaders, the business community, and Smyrna citizens, *Market Street Services* has facilitated an in-depth process that culminated in the creation of a clear **10-year Vision Plan** for Smyrna and guidelines to assist the City and its partners in implementation activities. The development of Smyrna's Vision has occurred in three phases. Each phase has been guided by an engaged Steering Committee of leaders from across the community and has been informed by community feedback.

Community Engagement

The inclusion of community stakeholders in Smyrna's Vision was critical to the plan's implementation and will impact its long-term sustainability. Community involvement opportunities included public feedback and opinions gathered through focus groups, stakeholder interviews, an online community survey, and social media.

Phase 1: Community Assessment

The first phase of this process combined qualitative and quantitative research to produce a clear profile of the City. The Community Assessment is structured around seven "storylines" and is intended to provide a common base of knowledge for thinking about the future of Smyrna. To provide context for the data analysis, Smyrna was compared to Marietta, Georgia; Cedar Park, Texas; and Matthews, North Carolina. Data for Metro Atlanta, Cobb County, the State of Georgia, and the nation was also included.

Phase 2: Smyrna's Vision

The second phase of the process focused on the determination of "what" Smyrna will do over the next 10 years. The Vision Plan was informed by and reflective of all the community input to-date, research findings, and discussions with community stakeholders. Not only does the Vision Plan articulate a concrete vision, it also includes objectives, actions, and tactical recommendations that allow City leaders and residents to affect the desired change.

Phase 3: Implementation Guidelines

Timely and effective implementation is critical to the ultimate success of Smyrna's Vision. If the Vision Plan represents the "what," the Implementation Guidelines represent "how" Smyrna's Vision will be accomplished. The Implementation Guidelines include detailed timelines, assign tasks to community partners, address capacity constraints, estimate which actions are likely to have more significant implementation costs, suggest possible funding sources, and provide measurement tools that will enable Smyrna's leaders and residents to track progress and goal attainment.

Smyrna Visioning Initiative Steering Committee Roster

Teri Anulewicz, City of Smyrna Councilwoman Ward 3
Holly Bass, Cobb Travel & Tourism
Jeff Belle, Vinings Mortgage
Maryline Blackburn, Artist and entertainer
Angie Bolton, IBM
Kim Brinson, Smyrna Tree Board
Anthony W. (Tony) Britton, Branch Banking & Trust Company, Co-Chair
Liz Davis, Keep Smyrna Beautiful
Stacey Evans, State Representative, House District 42
Ron Fennel, City of Smyrna Councilman Ward 7
Colin Gallagher, SmartBuild LLC
Slade Gulledge, Cobb Chamber of Commerce, Co-Chair
Chandra Harris, Congressman David Scott - Smyrna District Office
Eric Homansky, Smyrna Soccer Club
Winston Johnson, Maandi Media
Bill Marchione, Smyrna historian
David Monroe, Realtor
Susan Morgan, Public Relations Executive
Michelle M. Murphy, Co-President, Smyrna Elementary PTA
Derek Norton, Atlanta Apartments Association
Pastor Shell Osbon, Life Church Smyrna Assembly of God
Mel Pender, M&D Consulting Firm
Dan Penick, Campbell High School
Melleny Pritchett, City of Smyrna Mayor Pro-Tem and Councilwoman Ward 1, Co-Chair
Tim Stultz, Cobb Board of Education
Paula Weeks, The Coca-Cola Company
Charles Welch Jr., South City Partners
Tom Wood, Whitefield Academy

Technical Advisory Group

Eric Taylor, City Administrator
Ken Suddreth, Community Development Director
Jennifer Bennett, Community Relations Director
Tom Boland, Economic Development Manager
Christy Ullman, Executive Assistant to Mayor and Council

Mayor and Smyrna City Council

Market Street would also like to thank Mayor Max Bacon and the City Council for their input and engagement in this process.

FINDINGS AND CREATION OF THE VISION

The first step in the process was to conduct an in-depth **Community Assessment**, which provided the Steering Committee, Smyrna's leaders, and citizens with a common understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and strengths that currently define Smyrna. Based on extensive research and public input, seven "storylines" have been identified that provide insight into Smyrna's current social, demographic, and economic dynamics.

Market Street's data analysis was complemented by a significant amount of stakeholder input, which included 20 one-on-one individual interviews, 13 focus groups, and an online survey that reached 1,763 stakeholders. The seven "storylines" that emerged from the research (explained fully in the Competitive Assessment and are summarized in Appendix A) are:

1. Past, Present, and Future: What's Next for Smyrna?
2. Smyrna's Growth and Development
3. Public Education and Smyrna's Transitional Image
4. Quality of Life: A Defining Factor
5. Population Growth and Composition
6. Smyrna's Economic Landscape
7. Looking to the Future: Economic Opportunities

Building on the idea that community attachment and commitment are the primary themes of the vision for Smyrna, there are **three cornerstones** that seem to bind the residents of Smyrna together and can provide a foundation for moving Smyrna forward: **Involvement and Leadership, Quality of Place,** and **Image and Identity.**

A **Vision Statement** was created to communicate the key priorities of the community:

Smyrna will achieve the highest levels of community attachment and commitment by providing academic excellence for our children, fully involving our citizens in all aspects of the community, creating leadership opportunities for all residents, establishing high expectations for our quality of life and place, and creating a strong identity and image.

Within each of the three cornerstones, a number of "desired outcomes" or objectives were identified (provided on the following page). Each outcome was followed by specific recommended actions and tactical details to further describe what could be done to achieve each outcome.

SUMMARY OF VISION PLAN: CORNERSTONES AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

INVOLVEMENT AND LEADERSHIP DESIRED OUTCOMES

The future of Smyrna is contingent on how residents, leaders, and other stakeholders work together. With a diverse, young, well-educated population, the possibilities for affecting positive change are endless.

Smyrna will be a welcoming place where all residents are invited to engage in the community. (1.1)

Community leadership will reflect the diversity and demographics of the city. (1.2)

Residents and visitors alike will continue to enjoy a wide range of signature community events. (1.3)

Parents and businesses will be expected to be active partners with local schools. (1.4)

Smyrna will be an active participant in collaborative economic development and planning efforts. (1.5)

QUALITY OF PLACE DESIRED OUTCOMES

The quality of place attributes of a community impact resident attachment. The built environment has the ability to bring people together and create a feeling that "this is our place." Sustaining the parts of Smyrna that have been transformative to Smyrna's sense of place and finding new catalysts will be important to Smyrna's future.

Smyrna's public schools will be high-performing and sought out by parents and families. (2.1)

Residents will enjoy a range of transportation options and modes of activities, including increased pedestrian connectivity to destination centers inside and outside City borders. (2.2)

Smyrna will elevate opportunities for recreation and experiencing arts and culture. (2.3)

Housing diversity in Smyrna will enhance community attachment, cater to a diverse population, and be a model for other growing cities. (2.4)

Core City services, development, and redevelopment efforts will enhance quality of life and diversify the tax base. (2.5)

Retail options will align with resident preferences and more expenditures will stay in Smyrna. (2.6)

IMAGE AND IDENTITY DESIRED OUTCOMES

Residents are proud of the progress that has been made in terms of building a positive reputation. Smyrna has the opportunity to define, grow, and foster those assets that will be the core elements of its identity.

Smyrna will be known for its high quality schools. (3.1)

Smyrna will actively tell its story to internal and external stakeholders. (3.2)

Smyrna's aesthetics will be distinctive, of high quality, and recognizable to visitors and residents alike. (3.3)

Smyrna's entrepreneurial and technology assets will be part of its regional and national reputation. (3.4)

Smyrna will be known as a city that celebrates its diversity. (3.5)

LEADERSHIP AND OVERSIGHT

Now that the Vision Plan has been developed by the Steering Committee and informed by a substantial amount of citizen feedback and community research, attention has turned to creating Implementation Guidelines that will help move this process from planning to action.

There are many factors that will affect the long-term success of the Vision Plan – **increasing awareness** of the Vision Plan, **leveraging all resources** that can be applied to the Plan's implementation, and **tracking and reporting out progress** are all very important. Fully engaging Smyrna stakeholders is a critical first step, and clarifying various roles and responsibilities will be a large part of this first step.

Roles: Steering Committee; Residents and Stakeholders; and City

The roles of all stakeholders have been discussed extensively, and while these Implementation Guidelines will provide the initial structure, it is understood that responsibilities and expectations will evolve over time.

While the City of Smyrna initiated the planning process and empaneled the Steering Committee to guide the process and make decisions about the recommendations in the Vision Plan and the Implementation Guidelines, it is important to note that the City is not the only party needed to implement the strategic recommendations in the Vision Plan. In fact, **there are a number of recommendations that require significant volunteer support and collaboration with various organizations.** Therefore, there are three primary groups that will be involved in implementation:

The Implementation Executive Committee	*Work Groups, residents, and other stakeholders*	*City of Smyrna officials and staff*

Implementation Structure

The Steering Committee overwhelmingly determined that there is value in having a collaborative leadership group continue to provide oversight and direction during implementation. The Steering Committee has indicated that an Executive Committee-style group (approximately 10-15 people) would provide the best format to lead, coordinate, and guide future implementation efforts. Should some members be unavailable to continue serving in a primary leadership role, the option of transferring membership to logical "replacements" could also be considered. *For the purposes of this document, Implementation Executive Committee will be the term used.*

As has been shared with the group, experience has shown that continued dedication to the implementation of the Vision Plan by members of the original Steering Committee is the distinguishing factor that separates vibrant communities from those that struggle to gain and then maintain momentum.
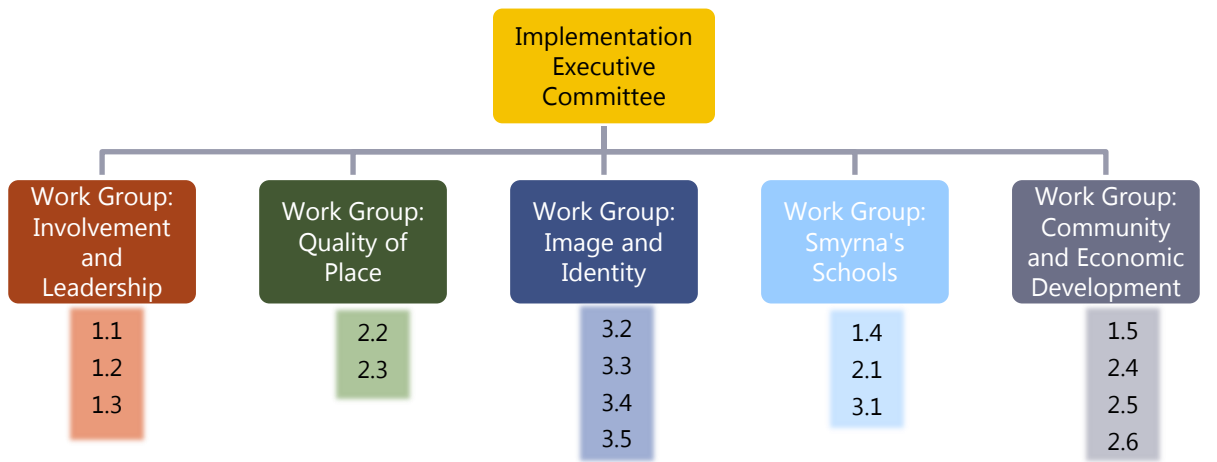
Similar to the roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee during the Visioning Initiative process, the Implementation Executive Committee will also have a "job description." The following sample provides the foundation, but Committee members may wish to add to this list.

1. Oversee the transition from a strategic planning process to an implementation effort.

2. Meet regularly (monthly or at least quarterly) to review the status of implementation efforts and progress in alignment with the Implementation Guidelines' Action Timelines.

3. Serve as community ambassadors that help coordinate outreach to necessary partners in implementation, educate relevant partners and the community at large regarding the Vision Plan's components, and communicate with partners and media regarding implementation progress.

4. Assist all implementation partners with the development of collaborative solutions to address any obstacles or barriers to implementation.

WORK GROUP STRUCTURE

In addition to the Implementation Executive Committee, a number of Work Groups will be needed to focus directly on accomplishing specific action items. Many communities choose to organize Work Groups around the structure of the Vision Plan, while others choose to break out into more topical groups.

The Steering Committee has determined that initial implementation efforts should be organized around a Work Group structure that aligns with the three cornerstones and **also includes two additional groups that will focus on two "break-out" areas – schools and community and economic development.** By breaking out actions related to these focus areas, all implementing partners will likely be able to more successfully concentrate efforts in areas that are most inter-connected. This structure is also expected to avoid the possibility of stretching volunteer and City staff resources thin by requiring the same individuals to be engaged in multiple groups, particularly related to community and economic development actions.

Implementation Executive Committee				
Work Group: Involvement and Leadership	Work Group: Quality of Place	Work Group: Image and Identity	Work Group: Smyrna's Schools	Work Group: Community and Economic Development
1.1	2.2	3.2	1.4	1.5
1.2	2.3	3.3	2.1	2.4
1.3		3.4	3.1	2.5
		3.5		2.6

Work Group members would include residents, City staff, and leaders from the business, school, and nonprofit communities. "External" partners could be invited to join Groups or participate in an informal way as needed (e.g., guest speakers, technical advisers, etc.). See summary provided on page 6 for the full listing of Desired Outcomes.

The structure provides an opportunity to combine the current Steering Committee with the Vision Committee tasked by the City to initiate this planning process, and address the need to integrate a broader base of residents, stakeholders, and external partners into the implementation structure. Functionally, Work Groups often meet monthly or every other month, and need to be "staffed" in terms of having someone assigned to coordinate meeting scheduling and preparation and dissemination of materials.

It should also be noted that the Implementation Executive Committee has also discussed the possibility of creating another "break-out" Work Group and/or a limited number of very specific task forces if needed.

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

The following list of organizations and entities includes partners that could potentially contribute to the successful implementation of the Vision Plan. The abbreviations are used in the Action Timelines to identify the partners that can take a lead or support role for each of the actions in the Vision Plan.[1]

While this is not a comprehensive list, it seeks to identify top partners to implement the actions with the expectation that additional organizations, individuals, and business community partners, will be identified as needed throughout the years of implementation.

Acronym	Implementation Partner	Acronym	Implementation Partner
AAA	Atlanta Apartment Association	HOA	Homeowner Associations
AB	Atlanta Braves	KIC	Keep it in Cobb
ABL	Atlanta Beltline	KSB	Keep Smyrna Beautiful
ARC	Atlanta Regional Commission	MIC	Mableton Improvement Coalition
BC	Bike Cobb	NA	Neighborhood Associations
CC	Connect the Comet	PF	PATH Foundation
CCBOC	Cobb County/Board of Commissioners	PIE	Partners in Education
CCBOE	Cobb County Board of Education	PRCA	Cobb County Parks, Recreation, Cultural Affairs
CCID	Cumberland Community Improvement District	PS	Private Schools (incl. pre-schools)
CCSAC	Cobb Chamber/Smyrna Area Council	PSF	Public Safety Foundation
CCT	Cobb County Transit	PTA	Parent Teacher Associations
CG	Civic Groups	PTS	Path to Shine
CHS	Campbell High School	RLHA	River Line Historic Area
CIS	Communities in Schools	SBA	Smyrna Business Association
City	City of Smyrna	SCAA	South Cobb Arts Alliance
CTT	Cobb Travel and Tourism	SCORE	Service Corps of Retired Executives
CVIOG	Carl Vinson Institute of Government	SCT	Scouting Groups
CW	CobbWorks	SDDA	Smyrna Downtown Development Authority
CYP	Cobb Chamber Young Professionals	SEF	Smyrna Education Foundation
DARB	Dobbins Air Reserve Base	SHA	Smyrna Housing Authority
EDGE	Cobb EDGE (Chamber)	SHGS	Smyrna Historical and Genealogical Society
EF	Individual School Educational Foundations	SSC	Smyrna School Councils
FBO	Faith-based Organizations	STI	Smyrna Technology Initiative
FIC	FACE it Cobb	TB	Tree Board
FOSL	Friends of the Smyrna Library	TBHF	Taylor-Brawner House Foundation
GMA	Georgia Municipal Association	TV23	Cobb County Public Access Channel
HE	Higher Education Institutions	WOE	Wave of Excellence

*CMTY denotes Community, where implementation of the action would involve a grassroots effort.

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[1] Faith-based organizations (FBO) includes churches, Ministries, The Garden, among others; Civic Groups include Lions, Kiwanis, Optimist, Legion, among others; and Higher Education (HE) primarily references Chattahoochee Technical College and Kennesaw State University.

COST CONSIDERATIONS

Implementing the Smyrna Vision Plan will require a variety of resources, primarily including fiscal support, personnel time, and volunteer engagement. The Implementation Guidelines provide a review of potential costs and funding sources. The goal is to provide a realistic understanding of the resources that may be needed over the course of the next decade to inform future decisions and implementation efforts. Additional discussion about funding sources and how budgets will be affected is an ongoing need (both for the City and partnering implementation organizations).

City of Smyrna Potential Staffing Needs

As the City and the community begin to implement the Vision Plan, the efforts of all partners will be maximized if there is proper administrative support provided to the Implementation Executive Committee and Work Groups. As noted in the City of Smyrna's 2013 Annual Report:

> "The number of personnel positions were decreased beginning in FY2009 based on the economic downturn. The City continues to be good stewards of public monies and maintains the lower staffing levels. As the economy begins to rebound, staffing needs may be reevaluated to determine any increases needed to maintain service levels based on rising population."

The culmination of the City's first comprehensive Vision Planning process provides an excellent opportunity to reevaluate staffing needs.

Given that the Steering Committee has expressed support for a City-supported Volunteer Coordinator position, *Market Street's* recommendation is that the responsibilities of this position include both general volunteer coordination for existing needs (primarily captured in Action 1.1.2), as well as support for the work of the Implementation Executive Committee and Work Groups.

It is understood that this recommendation, and any that concern City budget and staffing issues, would need to be brought before the Mayor and Council in an official capacity to ensure that the proper consideration, discussion, and voting procedures are followed.

Other potential staffing needs that will require further discussion reflect Vision Plan recommendations that would put an inordinate amount of responsibility on the current personnel. Two specific organizational areas that have been addressed more directly during the Visioning Initiative process are the current Community Relations Department and the Community Development Department. Given the emphasis on Image and Identity and numerous recommendations related to community events, it may be valuable to **consider adding a staff member to Community Relations** and dedicating one employee to communications and one to events, with a single Director providing oversight of both division or program areas.

There are also a number of recommendations that reflect the community's interest in being "proactive" in a number of areas that fall under the Community Development Department, which could require additional

staff support. Restructuring Economic Development functions could also necessitate an additional staff position if that route is taken. Maintaining the status quo in Community Development (which has served the City well given the resources that have recently been available) would not necessarily require additional staff capacity in the near future.

Overall, at a minimum, the City could easily benefit from an additional three staff positions (one Volunteer/Vision Plan Coordinator; one addition each in Community Relations and Community Development) and potentially would also need one or two additional new positions to fulfill the implementation of Vision Plan recommendations over the course of the next decade.

Funding Sources

In addition to actions that may possibly be funded by the City of Smyrna through the use of general funds or dedicated funds such as those generated by hotel/motel taxes, there are several other potential sources of funding for Vision Plan actions that may require financial support. One of the primary sources that would be applicable to capital-intensive actions (including transportation; trails and paths; and facilities, for example) is a possible county-level Special Local Option Sales Tax (**SPLOST**). Voters will be deciding on a proposed six-year SPLOST in the November 2014 election (for the years 2016 – 2021). Contained in the project list are funds for county-wide projects and specific requests for local projects, prioritized and requested by each of the county's six municipalities. Smyrna would be able to use $52,773,203, based upon population. The next SPLOST, if supported, would not take effect until 2022. However, developing the proposed project list would begin several years beforehand, likely in 2019 or 2020.

Additionally, the current Cobb County Ed-SPLOST that funds school-related capital improvement projects is set to expire in December 2018. Should another Ed-SPLOST pass to extend the tax from 2019 to 2023, the planning for future projects that could be funded by those monies would likely begin soon. The Ed-SPLOST has been viewed as a particularly important funding resource given that Cobb County is one of the only counties in Georgia that exempts all citizens 62 years and older from paying any school property tax.

Community resources and leveraging additional support
It will also be very important that existing community resources and partners be considered a major source of funding. While Smyrna ranked below comparison communities, it is a wealthier than average community (using Median Household Income as the standard), and there is possibly a pool of **individuals** in the community that have never been solicited to donate beyond one-time education, hardship, or other charitable fundraising efforts. It is also possible that some of Smyrna's potential charitable funds are flowing outside of the City, given the strong ties that many citizens have to other parts of the region.

Accessing these potential donors and presenting a compelling case for initiatives that can have a lasting impact on the community should be a high priority throughout implementation of the Vision Plan.

Leveraging the **501(c)3 organizations** that already exist is also important, and many of the recommendations in the Vision Plan align well with the mission of these organizations.[2]

The **Cobb Community Foundation** could be an excellent resource, and potentially, could house the bulk of funding needed that would not come from the City, other public sector sources, or implementing organizations. The Foundation currently manages a significant number of "organization and agency funds" which could provide a way for a large number of donors to support a single cause or mission-driven initiative such as the Smyrna Vision Plan.[3]

Providing support and training for potential **grant writers**, or potentially funding for a grant writing professional to support community organizations is another way that the City of Smyrna might be able to get a larger return on its investment and dramatically increase the community's capacity to fund short and long-term initiatives. This would not necessarily need to be a City employee, and could also include technical assistance for potential grant writers provided via City-sponsored workshops.

Additionally, there are also other foundations and regional and state-level resources that the community and/or City may qualify for, including grants and loans that have been used in the past, as well as new or never-accessed points of funding.

Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is one tool that is being utilized by communities to raise the necessary funds for civic-backed projects and community improvements. Kickstarter and Indiegogo are two of the most popular platforms used to raise money for a variety of campaigns, and while they've mostly been used to collect donations for a cause or raise funds for entrepreneurs, many community organizations are starting to take advantage of the fundraising websites.

Educating community volunteers and organizations about crowdfunding tools could substantially expand the pool of resources available to implement Vision Plan initiatives. Maintaining and sharing information about campaigns underway in the community could be a responsibility of the proposed Volunteer Coordinator and/or could be coordinated by the City's Economic Development staff to reflect the applicability of these tools for entrepreneurs.

See Appendix B for additional information regarding crowdfunding.

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[2] Including but not limited to: Keep Smyrna Beautiful; the Smyrna Education Foundation; Public Safety Foundation; and Friends of the Smyrna Library.

[3] The Cobb Community Foundation's "Simple Abundance Fund" is a pot of funding from many donors who wish to contribute what they can to meet the important needs of women and children. The minimum level for donations is $100 annually. Grants are determined by a committee comprised of the donors.

PRIORITIES AND ACTION TIMELINES

As has been noted, the Vision Plan focused on "what" Smyrna should do over the next 10 years, and the Implementation Guidelines provide the framework for "how" Smyrna's Vision will be successfully achieved.

The Steering Committee has had numerous discussions regarding the development of priorities and the creation of initial Action Timelines to guide implementation efforts. Understanding that the Work Groups will revisit priorities once implementation begins, the 59 specific recommended actions have been organized into four groups of timelines:

1. **Core City Functions**

   This group of actions includes a number of functions and activities that the Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Group has agreed are "expected responsibilities" of the City. Many of these actions are underway to a certain degree, and also include ongoing activities. All are high priorities that need significant City engagement and leadership. These areas could be framed as the City's "high priority task list" to be pursued concurrent with actions being led more directly by work groups and community partners.

2. **Years 1-2 (2015 – 2016)**

   These actions are considered very high priority and include some "early wins" and the initiation of longer-term efforts that will either take years to accomplish, or might become ongoing initiatives.

3. **Years 3-4 (2017 – 2018)**

   Many of the action items included in the Vision Plan will likely begin in Years 3-4, in keeping with the natural increase in momentum and resource development that often follows the first two years of organizing and expanding volunteer engagement, achieving early wins, and kicking off several high priority efforts.

4. **Years 5-10 (2019 – 2024)**

   This timeline includes items that might be more successful if other actions are first implemented, and also includes several of the actions that might require additional funding or staffing resources.

The timeline groupings were informed by:

✓ The scoring sheets used during the August 27th meeting;

✓ Steering Committee discussion during the September 25th and October 23rd meetings;

✓ Responses to the survey following the September 25th meeting;

✓ Feedback received during the public input process;

✓ Key research findings from the Community Assessment;

✓ *Market Street's* experience from other communities; and

✓ The realities of public and non-profit budgeting and grant-making cycles and time needed to form collaborative partnerships.

As noted, priorities may be reordered once implementation has begun, but it is important that the consensus-based process and collective decisions made by the Steering Committee be respected, particularly during the first five years of implementation.

For each Action Timeline that follows, the action is accompanied by details related to possible lead and supporting partners.

Pre-Implementation Activities and Transition Schedule

Throughout this process regular updates have been provided during the City's Committee of the Whole meetings on Monday nights. These briefings were an opportunity for the *Market Street* team to share research findings and progress of the Steering Committee, and to take any questions that our elected officials may have had about the process. Following the September 22nd and October 27th briefings, an Executive Summary of the Vision Plan was entered as an item on the agenda for the November 3rd Council Meeting. These steps to date and possible "pre-implementation" activities are outlined below to assist with the transition from planning to action.

- **Elected Officials:** All Steering Committee members were asked to attend the November 3rd Council meeting as audience members, and have been encouraged to speak with their elected official to share personal perspectives about the vision planning process and the recommendations included within the plan.

- **Implementation Meeting Schedule (2015):** *Market Street* recommends holding the first Implementation Executive Committee meeting in early 2015 (ideally by March), coordinated with the initial meetings for Work Groups. This will allow existing Steering Committee members and staff to hold an organizational meeting to identify additional member needs and possible sub-group volunteer needs. The group could also use this time to create a schedule for the remainder of 2015 with the goal of meeting monthly or every other month.

  o The success of the Vision Plan is dependent upon the community embracing recommendations and engaging in collaborative implementation efforts. A public roll-out could be held to excite the community and cap off the "quiet phase" of recruitment for Work Groups and other volunteer needs. The roll-out could be held in conjunction with a highly visible event, such as the Jonquil Festival (April 25-26, 2015), to ensure maximum exposure. Additionally, a variety of media outlets could be used to publicize the event and highlight Smyrna's Vision Plan.

  During the public input phase, 1,763 individuals completed the online survey, more than 150 people filled out a shortened hard copy of the survey, and 20 one-on-one interviews and 13 focus groups were facilitated by *Market Street*. Many of those participants will be among the volunteers that help to implement the action items and re-connecting with them, as well as connecting with

new residents by explaining the process and outcomes, will be an important factor in achieving long-term success.

Possible schedule for transitioning to Implementation

Creation of Implementation Guidelines
(Sept– Oct 2014)

Transition from planning phase to implementation
(Nov – Dec 2014)

Organizing meetings for Implementation Executive Committee and Work Groups
(Jan – March 2015)

Public Rollout and Completion of Volunteer Recruitment
(April 2015)

Core City Functions

As noted, this group of actions includes a number of functions and activities that the Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Group has agreed are "expected responsibilities" of the City. Many of these actions are underway to a certain degree, and also include ongoing activities. All are high priorities that need significant City engagement and leadership. These areas could be framed as the City's "high priority task list" to be pursued concurrent with actions being led more directly by work groups and community partners.

	Potential Lead Entities	Potential Support Entities
1.2.1 Ensure that City Board and Commission appointments are kept up to date and represent all parts of the community.	City	
2.3.2 Explore additional opportunities to complement ongoing public library system investments.	City/FOSL	ACC; HOA
2.5.1 Continue to maintain high quality standards for the delivery of all City services.	City	FBO; HOA; NA; PSF
2.5.2 Pro-actively encourage high quality redevelopment throughout the city.	City	EDGE; CCSAC
3.2.3 Collaborate with Cobb EDGE, CobbWorks, and other workforce and economic development partners to highlight Smyrna as a progressive, high-achieving community and destination for educated and skilled talent.	City	CW; EDGE
3.3.2 Expand upon existing beautification efforts.	City	KSB; TB; SBA
3.4.1 Seek Entrepreneur Friendly Community status through the Georgia Department of Economic Development.	City	CCSAC; CCBOC
3.4.2 Build on the Google Fiber initiative to expand awareness of existing supply and demand throughout the community.	City	CCSAC; FOSL; SBA; STI

Core City Functions – Cost Considerations

The biggest funding need would be the potential addition of one or more City personnel positions. Other costs which could be needed in the first year could be related to the following actions:

- 2.5.1 and 2.5.2 – As previously noted, recommendations regarding expanding the ability of the **Community Development Department** to be more proactive (rather than maintaining levels of service) may require additional staff support.

- 2.3.2 and 3.4.2 – While **library improvements and enhancements** are included in the City's annual budget, expanding offerings to the southern portion of the City could require minimal funding (e.g. Little Free Libraries) or much more (a facility). Additionally, the implementation of a WiFi hotspot device lending program would likely require financial resources above and beyond the current library budget. Corporate sponsorship and/or advertising partnerships could potentially offset some of the expense.

- 3.3.2 – Expanded **beautification efforts**, including more tree plantings but especially a façade improvement grant program, would require additional funding from the City and/or private and non-profit partners.

Years 1-2 (2015 – 2016)

	Potential Lead Entities	Potential Support Entities
1.1.2 Encourage more volunteer engagement in the Smyrna community.	City	KSB; PSF; FOSL; PTA
1.2.2 Strengthen Smyrna's engagement in representative governance.	City	GMA; CVIOG
1.4.1 Ensure that Smyrna parents and stakeholders are consistently represented at Cobb County Board of Education meetings.	PTA; WOE	CCBOE; EF; FIC; HOA; SEF; SSC
1.4.2 Build connections between local technology companies and local schools.	STI	PTA; EF; SSC
1.5.3 Ensure that Smyrna is involved in county-level, regional, and state-level initiatives.	City	ARC; CCBOC; CCBOE
2.1.1 Encourage a significant expansion of the Smyrna Education Foundation's (SEF) ability to impact policy, leadership, and further investment in area schools.	SEF	EF; CCBOE; FIC; PTA; SBA; STI; WOE
2.1.7 Coordinate with Campbell High School booster clubs to create community events in conjunction with school functions.	CHS	CG; KSB; FBO; HOA; NA; SCT; WOE
2.2.6 Evaluate the feasibility of shuttle service between commercial districts in Smyrna and the Atlanta Braves stadium using the circulator system being envisioned for the Cumberland Galleria area.	City	CCID; CCT; CTT; SBA;
2.4.1 Conduct a housing master plan to promote the densities and types of housing that will be favorable to Smyrna's continued development.	City	SHA
2.4.2 Evaluate the competitiveness of City incentives for new mixed-use development.	City	GMA
2.4.3 Improve the quality of multi-family housing and the living experience of residents.	AAA	City; CCSAC; PSF
3.1.1 Tell the success stories of Smyrna public schools to internal and external audiences.	WOE; PTA	EDGE; PS; PTS; TV23;
3.2.2 Take a leadership role in the Cobb EDGE Community Identity Panel initiative.	City	CTT; EDGE; SBA
3.3.3 Create gateways into Smyrna that are recognizable and distinct.	City	AB; CCBOC; KSB

Years 1-2 Cost Considerations

The goal for the first two years of implementation is to keep costs at a minimum, while the Executive Committee and Work Groups get organized, develop meeting schedules, and set expectations for tracking progress. Other costs which could be needed in the first year could be related to the following actions:

- 1.2.2 – Several tactical recommendations related to strengthening Smyrna **citizens' engagement** in representative governance will require staff time and increased collaboration with various partners. A Citizen Planning Academy could require some financial support depending on the scale of the program and related events.

- 2.1.1 – **Expanding SEF's impact** will require the time and energy of the Board initially, but additionally, funding from the community will be needed if a staff person is to be hired to manage an expanded program of work and/or seek additional funding for the foundation.

- 2.2.6 – A third-party feasibility study regarding Braves stadium **shuttle service** options would require the City to enter into a contract for professional services. An alternative, lower-cost approach would involve working with the Cumberland CID and CCT to build upon the work that is underway.

- 2.4.1 – Depending on how inclusive the process would be, the creation of a **Housing Master Plan** could be managed by City staff with support from members of the Smyrna Housing Authority, supplemented as needed by advisors and other volunteers. Retaining a professional facilitator or consultant would increase out of pocket costs but might reduce staff time needed.

- 2.4.3 – Several of the actions related to improving the **quality of multi-family housing and residents' living experiences** could require funding, ranging from nominal support materials associated with recognition programs for developers and corporate partners to a tax incentive for upgrades.

- 3.1.1 – **Telling the success stories of Smyrna's public schools** can be coordinated with the efforts of individual schools and potentially, costs can be shared. Most likely, some additional resources will be needed to support the development of some type of communications materials that reflect a compilation of individual school materials (whether print, online, or low-cost video testimonials, for example).

- 3.2.2 – Much of Smyrna's participation in the **Community Identity Panel** should require little or no out of pocket funding, though the production of low-cost video testimonials could benefit from professional services if not obtained via in-kind donations.

- 3.3.3 – While some of the **gateway**-related actions may be included in regular budgetary items, expanding improvements could require an increase in funding, particularly related to bridge façades and street toppers.

Years 3-4 (2017 – 2018)

	Potential Lead Entities	Potential Support Entities
1.1.1 Establish a physical presence at all community events that provides residents and visitors with information about Smyrna and ways to be involved.	City	CG; FBO; KSB; PSF; FOSL; HOA; SBA; SCT
1.2.5 Encourage the formation of a Faith-Based Leadership Council to reflect a shared mission of collaborative efforts on behalf of community needs.	FBO	City; CG; HOA; NA
1.3.1 Optimize Food Truck Tuesdays by continuing to address challenges that could limit the long-term success and viability.	City	
1.3.3 Continue to be open to adapting successful events from Atlanta to a new suburban setting.	City/ CMTY	BC; City; CYP
1.4.3 Empanel a Career Education Task Force to identify opportunities for experiential-based learning in all local Smyrna schools.	SEF	SSC; EF; HE; CCBOE; CIS; PIE
1.4.6 Establish new ways for parents to be involved in local schools.	WOE	EF; HOA; NA; PTA; SSC; SEF
1.5.1 Implement best practice economic development programs that are driven by a fully supported professional staff team.	City	DARB; EDGE; SBA; STI
1.5.2 Establish strong support systems for existing and future small business owners.	City	HE; CCSAC; STI; SBA; SCORE
2.1.2 Led by the SEF, establish an Education Agenda for Smyrna that provides a detailed summary of the community's expectations for the educational system in Smyrna.	SEF	EF; CCBOE; CCSAC; FIC; PS; PTA; SBA; STI; WOE
2.1.3 Build on the success of the International Baccalaureate programs and expand complementary and supplementary programs for students.	CHS	CCBOE; CCSAC; HE; SBA
2.1.4 Consider expanding Leader in Me programming to additional Elementary Schools.	CCBOE	EF; CCSAC; PTA; WOE
2.2.1 Advocate for alternative transportation options that can alleviate congestion for Smyrna residents.	City	ARC; CCT; CCSAC
2.2.3 Become the first community "outside the Perimeter" to connect to the Atlanta Beltline.	CC	ABL; BC; City; CTT; PATH

Years 3-4 (2017 – 2018), cont.

	Potential Lead Entities	Potential Support Entities
2.2.4 Implement recommendations related to trail and path connectivity as contained in the Parks and Recreation Ten Year Master Plan.	City	PRCA
2.3.1 Establish an advisory Arts and Culture Council to increase opportunities for high quality programming.	City	CG; CTT; FOSL; MIC; PRCA; RLHA; SCAA; SHGS; TBHF
2.3.3 Create a tour map of Smyrna historical and cultural sites.	SHGS	City; CTT; MIC; RLHA
2.3.4 Evaluate feasibility of constructing a new aquatics center.	City	PRCA; CTT
2.5.3 Seek to increase the inventory of quality office space within the City.	City	EDGE; CCSAC
2.6.1 Leverage findings of retail leakage and surplus study to strengthen retail recruitment and expansion effort.	City	EDGE; SBA; SBDC; SCORE
3.1.2 Increase school pride through targeted campaigns to maintain and upgrade school exteriors and grounds.	SEF	EF; CCBOE; FIC; PTA; WOE
3.2.1 Develop an internal communications plan that seeks to inform community members about Smyrna and the direction it's headed.	City	CG; HOA; NA
3.3.1 Hold a First Impressions Exchange Program with another regional city to receive candid feedback on the appearance of Smyrna.	City; CCSAC	ARC; CYP; CVIOG; GMA; SBA
3.3.4 Strengthen Smyrna's Image as a City committed to sustainable practices.	City	CG; FOSL; HOA; NA; SBA
3.4.3 Widely promote collaborations and access to the region's robust technology environment.	City; STI	SBA; DARB; EDGE
3.5.1 Create a Multicultural Council or Committee to reinforce Smyrna's image and identity as a city that celebrates its diversity.	City	FBO; FOSL; GMA; CVIG

Years 3-4 Cost Considerations

As previously noted, a large proportion of the action items included in the Vision Plan will likely begin in Years 3-4, in keeping with the natural increase in momentum that often follows initial efforts focused on organizing and expanding volunteer engagement, achieving early wins, and kicking off several high priority efforts. Several more funding needs will arise in these years as a result. The following list includes many of the actions that will require financial support in Years 3-4.

This is not an exhaustive list, but it should be used as a guide to help determine prioritization decisions. Each Work Group will also need to revisit, refine, and confirm initial and ongoing costs as implementation details are determined.

- 1.1.1 – **Outreach efforts** would be enhanced with the addition of marketing materials, and costs for brochures or other items could range significantly depending on whether they are designed and produced in-house, via in-kind support, or outsourced.

- 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 – Given that these actions focus on continued, and potentially expanded, collaboration with Cobb EDGE as well as the possible establishment of a City department that specifically focuses on **economic development**, there are a number of tactical recommendations that require significant staff support. As previously mentioned, another staff position may be warranted. In addition, co-hosting the Cobb Chamber's Existing Industry Symposium could also require a small amount of financial support for event needs.

- 2.1.4 – Expanding **Leader in Me** programs to other schools would require a substantial source of funding for a three-year minimum commitment, as would expanding **complementary and supplementary programs around IB** (2.1.3).

- 2.2.1 – While advocating for **alternative transportation** primarily requires dedicated staff and leadership time and effort, there could be a financial requirement if the community saw the need to create any Smyrna-specific surveys or data sources to inform efforts. Some of the recommendations could also lead to increased operational costs for the City and/or infrastructure projects that require funding from beyond the City.

- 2.2.3 – Expanding existing efforts underway to **connect to the Beltline** may not initially require funding, but similar initiatives have benefited from supporting a staff person or engaging outside professional services. Keeping the Connect the Comet initiative as more of a grassroots effort could also be a viable option, but might be a slower process.

- 2.3.3 – While the costs would be relatively minor, it is worth noting that the creation of a **tour map** of Smyrna historical and cultural sites would be a perfect opportunity to try a crowdfunding campaign.

- 2.3.4 – Evaluating the feasibility of an **aquatics center** could be a shared cost with Cobb County Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs and Cobb Travel and Tourism.

- 2.6.1 – Recommendations related to retail include the possibility of obtaining a **full retail analysis**, which could be accomplished through either a one-time purchase of data or a multi-year contract with a firm specializing in retail analytics.

- *Action 2.2.4 would have implementation costs, but given that this recommendation emphasizes the need to move forward with trail and path connectivity recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Ten Year Master Plan, including financial needs here would be duplicative.*

- Finally, **ongoing efforts initiated in Year 1** could also require funding support in Years 3-4, particularly concerning continuing community-wide and education-related outreach and promotion and operational costs related to staff and shuttle service.

Years 5-10 (2019 – 2024)

	Potential Lead Entities	Potential Support Entities
1.2.3 Create a stronger connection to Cobb Young Professionals (CYP).	CCSAC; CYP	City; SBA; STI
1.2.4 Establish youth leadership opportunities that connect local students with government.	City	CCSAC
1.3.2 Effectively leverage Taste of Smyrna as an opportunity to support cultural diversification goals.	City	CCSAC; SBA
1.4.4 Hold a regular financial aid event where families of high school seniors can receive help with filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form.	SEF	City; CHS; HE; PTS
1.4.5 Continue to recognize outstanding Students, Teachers, Parent and Business volunteers.	City	PTA; CCSAC; CCBOE
2.1.5 Promote and expand resources that provide assistance in the classroom and outside of school to address needs of students in lower-performing schools.	CCBOE	EF; FBO; PTA; PTS; SEF
2.1.6 Evaluate the feasibility of creating a City of Smyrna school district.	CMTY	City; EF; PTA; WOE
2.2.2 Explore opportunities to provide subsidized shuttle service to Hartsfield Jackson International Airport for Smyrna residents and workers to provide a distinctive amenity for the Smyrna community.	City	ARC; CCT; SBA
2.2.5 Undertake a catalytic project in or adjacent to the Market Village area.	City	CCBOC; CCBOE; EDGE; SBA; STI
3.1.3 Expand information sharing between public and private schools.	PS; PTA	SEF
3.5.2 Build awareness of existing Multicultural celebrations and/or expand to include a signature event.	City	FOSL; SBA
2.6.2 Implement a "Buy Local" program.	SBA; City	CTT; KIC; SDDA

Years 5-10 Cost Considerations

Given that fewer action items will be initiated in the last six years of Vision Plan implementation, there are naturally fewer cost considerations to be reviewed. However, it should be noted that some of the items that may fit best in the second half of implementation are also those that need several years of pre-planning because there are potentially higher financial needs associated with the execution of the recommendation.

- 1.3.2 – One or more new events associated with the **Taste of Smyrna** (related to multicultural awareness) could be primarily offset by sponsorships and ticket sales, but would potentially require some level of financial support and staff time, to get started.

- 1.4.5 – Adding **scholarships** to an expanded Mayor's Education Award program would require fundraising or City support.

- 2.1.6 – Gauging the ability of the Smyrna community to create an **independent school district** would likely require an assessment by a third-party and an understanding of what is possible and what would be required at the state level. Actually moving forward with creating Smyrna School District would require an even greater investment of time and potentially, professional support and guidance.

- 2.2.2 – **Subsidized airport shuttle service** would require funding, or at the very least, the creation of a strong sponsorship and advertising program to offset the costs not covered by shuttle users.

- 2.2.5 – Implementing a **catalytic project** in or adjacent to the Market Village area could require significant financial resources, depending on the scale of the project. Alternatively, a private sector development could potentially fulfill the spirit of this recommendation, if the project included provisions jointly developed with the City and through a very inclusive process.

- 3.5.2 – The range of actions related to **multicultural celebrations** (or possibly a new event) could potentially extend to requiring funding. However, it should be noted that this action may also overlap with other activities being implemented as part of community events and the newly proposed Arts and Culture Council.

- While not related to a specific action item, there may be some benefit in engaging a third party to evaluate progress and/or assist with an update of the Vision Plan and a review of metrics. Many communities opt to conduct a "mid-course" correction prior to a full update.

- And, similar to Years 3-4, **ongoing efforts previously initiated** could also require funding support in Years 5-10.

MEASURING PROGRESS, SUCCESS, AND THE VITALITY OF THE COMMUNITY

Performance metrics and activity measures provide tangible results to residents, community leaders, and regional stakeholders and is a method to track the progress of programs and action items as they are implemented. These goals or metrics provide the lead partner with the essential tools to ensure the project's success and are necessary to keeping the project on-track. Publicly, these metrics and measurements increase transparency on community and City-led projects and keep the public involved, aware, and up to date on each project's progress.

City staff should be tasked with tracking and collecting all information that is tied to City-led action items to ensure accurate and consistent performance measurements. The Implementation Executive Committee should meet annually to review these metrics. These annual "check-ups" serve to track the vitality of the community much like the way an annual health check-up for an individual reveals issues that need extra attention. Additionally, there could be a follow-up survey to residents every five to six years to ensure that the Vision Plan continues to align with Smyrna residents' desired outcomes. If conducted around the end or beginning of each year, the annual Vision Plan check-up could serve as a nice complement to the City's mid-year State of the City address, in terms of communicating progress to citizens and maintaining civic engagement.

It's important to note that the following tables are not exhaustive and that those metrics that are already being tracked by the City and/or partner organizations that are not included here should continue to be tracked, while other metrics may certainly be added. See Appendix C for additional information regarding performance metrics and activity measures.

Performance Metrics

Careful analysis of the City's past performance, current trends, local knowledge of current and future developments and their anticipated impact, and the improved outcomes expected with effective implementation were used to calculate the performance metrics for the future state of the City. The performance metrics provide discrete and measurable indicators with the latest figure and source.

Just as the Vision Plan is a living document, so too are the Implementation Guidelines. The volatility and the uncertainty of the economy ten years into the future may lead to revisions and adjustments to the performance metrics based on unexpected circumstances and impactful events, as was seen in the 2000s. Additionally, any significant changes in City activities resulting in large increases in annexations or other changes that would have a significant impact on the community statistics, would affect these projections, and as such, these metrics should be revisited every few years and adjusted accordingly to realign with any significant unforeseen changes made to Smyrna's economic, demographic, or physical composition.

Performance Metric	Latest Figure		Implementation Start	Midway Point			Implementation Completion			Source
					2015-2020			2015-2025		
	Value	Year	2015 Estimate	2020	Raw Change	Percent Change	2025	Raw Change	Percent Change	
Population	52,650	2012	54,999	59,836	4,837	8.8%	64,587	4,751	8.6%	U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates
Percentage of the population age 5-19	14.5%	2012	14.5%	15.5%	1.0 pct. pt.		16.9%	1.4 pct. pts.		U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey
Percentage of adults (age 25+) with a bachelor's degree or higher	52.2%	2012	54.4%	58.5%	4.1 pct. pts.		63.3%	4.8 pct. pts.		U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey
Poverty rate*	13.7%	2012	13.7%	12.5%	-1.2 pct. pts.		10.6%	-1.9 pct. pts.		U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey
Median household income	$53,605	2012	$52,792	$55,621	$2,829	5.4%	$60,274	$4,653	8.4%	U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey
Percentage of residents self-employed	5.0%	2012	5.2%	5.5%	0.3 pct. pts.		6.0%	0.8 pct. pts.		U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey
Unemployment rate	7.5%	2013	6.5%	5.0%	-1.5 pct. pts.		4.4%	-0.6 pct. pts.		BLS, LAUS
Total employment	27,431	2013	28,468	30,560	2,092	7.3%	31,745	3,277	11.5%	BLS, LAUS
Percentage of commuters traveling less than 30 minutes to work	53.6%	2012	52.4%	53.6%	1.2 pct. pts.		57.3%	3.7 pct. pts.		U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey
Violent crime rate (per 10,000)	30.6	2012	29.4	25.8	-3.6	-12.4%	22.6	-3.2	-12.4%	FBI
Property crime rate (per 10,000)	265.0	2012	243.4	206.8	-36.6	-15.0%	158.0	-48.8	-23.6%	FBI
Annual number of building permits issued (all types)	959	2013	Continue to track through City records							City of Smyrna
Average SAT score	1,484	2012	1,492	1,510	18.0	1.2%	1,548	38.0	2.5%	Georgia Department of Education
Graduation rate	66.3%	2013	69.1%	74.1%	5.0 pct. pts.		81.8%	7.7 pct. pts.		Georgia Department of Education
Dropout rate	5.5%	2013	5.5%	4.9%	1.6 pct. pts.		4.4%	0.5 pct. pts.		Georgia Department of Education

*Based on the Census Bureau's poverty threshold. In 2012, the poverty threshold for a family of four with two children was $23,283.

Activity Measures

The table provided on the following page offers a list of measures that could be used by implementation partners to track the effectiveness and value of a program. The values of the indicators have been left blank. As Work Groups are established, one of their first tasks will be defining and establishing the goals for the activity measure. In some cases, new metrics will need to be created, such as in the case of the aesthetics outcome and the commitment to sustainable practices. In other cases, such as the number of library visitors, the metric is already being measured and should continue to be tracked. Either way, implementation partners should work together to create midpoint and completion goals for the measurements. Smyrna's Vision is to achieve the highest levels of community attachment and commitment and to establish high expectations of quality of life; to do so, will involve going above and beyond past efforts.

Outcome	Activity Measure	Action's Progress		
		Implementation Start	Midpoint	Implementation Completion
		2015	2020	2024
Our Involvement & Leadership				
1.1	Number of new resident welcome letters sent out			
1.1	Number of total volunteers			
1.1	Number of volunteer hours			
1.2	Number of churches and faith organizations in the Faith-Based Council			
1.3	Number of festivals			
1.4	Number of Cobb County Board of Education meetings attended by Smyrna representatives or "delegation"			
1.4	Number of events held at schools with local technology organizations and companies			
1.4	Number of participants in new programs implemented by the Career Education Task Force			
1.4	Number of attendees to the Financial Aid Event			
1.5	Number of completed Enterprise and Opportunity Zone Certifications			
1.5	Number of contacts made by ED Staff			
1.5	Number of Smyrna hosted events with county, regional, and state partners			
1.5	Number of small businesses			
Our Quality of Place				
2.1	Amount of annual funds raised by Smyrna Education Foundation			
2.3	Number of art and cultural events held			
2.3	Number of library visitors			
2.5	Square footage of Class A office space			
2.5	Number of citations issued for Code Enforcement			
2.5	Number of zoning applications			
2.6	Implement a "buy local" program and evaluate its success			
Our Image & Identity				
3.1	Number of participants in the "Principal for a Day" program			
3.1	Number of participants in the Campbell Cares program and the Quarterly Clean-up			
3.2	Number of media mentions at the county, state, or national level			
3.2	Number of media contacts and/or interviews			
3.3	Number of businesses receiving the newly created façade improvement grant			
3.4	Number of attendees at First Thursday monthly meetings for Smyrna Technology Initiative (STI)			
3.4	Number of attendees at STI's Biweekly "Ask the Tech Expert" advice panel			

The final table provides activity measures that simply track the achievement or completion of specific actions, such as "Creation of a Faith-based Leadership Council," rather than the progress of an indicator. The table helps to keep these action items alive and on the implementation partners' radars as an item that has been proposed and not yet started, is in progress of completing, or has been completed.

Outcome	Activity Measure	Status	Qtr/Yr
	Our Involvement & Leadership		
1.2	Creation of a Citizen Participation Handbook		
1.2	Establishment of a political candidate training program		
1.2	Creation of Faith-Based Leadership Council		
1.5	Establishment of an Economic Development Agenda		
1.5	Creation of checklist for starting new business		
	Our Quality of Place		
2.1	Establishment of an Education Agenda for Smyrna		
2.1	Evaluation completed on the Leader in Me program at Smyrna Elementary School with performance metrics		
2.2	Evaluation completed on the feasibility of working with local companies to provide subsidized shuttle service to Hartsfield Jackson International Airport		
2.2	Connect the Comet to the Atlanta Beltline		
2.2	Implementation of established recommendations that were identified in the Parks & Recreation Ten Year Master Plan		
2.2	Feasibility of a shuttle between Smyrna and the Braves Stadium evaluated		
2.3	Establishment of an Arts and Culture Council		
2.3	Creation of a tour map of Smyrna historical and cultural sites		
2.3	A Smyrna aquatics center feasibility study is completed		
2.4	Completion of a housing master plan		
2.4	Evaluations completed on the competitiveness of the city incentives for new mixed-use development		
	Our Image & Identity		
3.2	Development of an internal communications plan		
3.3	Hold a first impressions exchange program with another regional city		
3.4	Achievement of Entrepreneur Friendly Community status through the Georgia Department of Economic Development		
3.5	Creation of a Multicultural Council or Committee		

Status Key:

Not yet started	
In progress	
Completed	

CONCLUSION

Smyrna is already in an enviable position, having all of the fundamental components that are needed to be an even more dynamic 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.

The Smyrna Vision Plan and the implementation structure outlined in this Guidelines document are direct products of the vision of Smyrna's residents. The Steering Committee convened for this process has produced a clear blueprint for the Smyrna's next 10 years. It follows that successful implementation can proceed in a similarly collaborative manner and will require new expenditures, additional capacities, and long-term commitments from implementation partners.

While there are numerous important suggestions within in this document related to implementation, some of the key guidelines related to capacity and resources include:

- Additional staff position recommendations as noted on pages 11 and 12, specifically:

    o A position which manages both general existing volunteer needs (primarily captured in Action 1.1.2), and also directly supports the work of the Implementation Executive Committee and Work Groups; and

    o Two or more positions in Community Relations and Community Development.

- Proactively pursuing various funding sources in alignment with Vision Plan recommendations, whether in the form of SPLOST and Ed-SPLOST project lists, or individual fundraising, grant-writing, or new charitable giving initiatives (see pages 12-13).

The Steering Committee has finalized the Guidelines and ensured that there is a clear roadmap for moving from planning to action. All final decisions related to the best long-term **structure** for implementation oversight and tracking; priorities and **Action Timelines**; the identification of lead and supporting implementation **partners**; and capacity needs related to **funding, staffing, and volunteer support** have been discussed to ensure that the actions included in the Vision Plan are accomplished as successfully as possible.

The next few years will be an exciting time for Smyrna; the community's dedication to proactively developing a Vision Plan and pledging to fulfill the Plan's implementation speaks volumes about the level of commitment and attachment to Smyrna that citizens and leaders already have. Cultivating that commitment and attachment can only produce even more long-term success and positive impact throughout the community.

APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

The seven storylines from the Community Assessment are summarized below and on the following pages.[4]

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Past, Present, and Future: What's Next for Smyrna?

There is a distinct feeling in Smyrna that the future holds great promise. The development of the Atlanta Braves stadium; momentum for development of major parcels including the former Jonquil Plaza site and others; consideration for Google fiber; and the planned Riverview Landing project by Jamestown Properties provide great optimism for many residents. These projects are just a few of the activities that support the sense of ascendancy in Smyrna and many people believe that negative perceptions of Smyrna are fading. However, there is also concern about the effects of these projects on traffic and congestion, as well as the omnipresent shadow of concerns that public schools may be underperforming. While Smyrna is a destination for a young, diverse, and well-educated population, there is a distinct question about Smyrna's ability to attract and retain families.

Smyrna's Growth and Development

Population in Smyrna has grown over the past decade, outpacing the City of Atlanta, but lagging behind many other suburban communities in Metro Atlanta. Between 2007 and 2012, when mobility was severely hampered by the Great Recession, Smyrna continued to add residents, underscoring its status as a destination within Cobb County. In order to accommodate the population growth, Smyrna has primarily added density, rather than new land area. This density, coupled with a moratorium on apartments that began in the early 1990s, is related to the community's aging stock of multifamily buildings. The lack of new apartment buildings, especially high quality units, has eroded any competitive or market pressures that would be placed on current apartment building owners. The result is that rents are competitively lower, allowing for younger people to access the market. At the same time, there is concern that community tenure and attachment are being eroded by the less expensive, poorly maintained housing options that increase levels of transiency among the population.

Public Education and Smyrna's Transitional Image

When survey respondents were asked to identify Smyrna's greatest challenge, the overwhelming answer was "schools." Concerns over underperformance (especially in middle and high school), both real and perceived; school safety, physical appearance, and leadership quality were apparent and are supported by input and data. The result has been an exodus of young families. In fact, of the comparison communities, Smyrna has the highest share of residents under the age of two, but has the lowest share of population

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[4]The full Community Assessment can be accessed either on the project website (smyrnavision.com) or via the City of Smyrna official website and archived information (smyrnacity.com).

between ages seven and 20. This "hollowing out" of the population directly correlates to the core school years. However, with many people in Smyrna immobilized by the Great Recession, fewer families were able to leave the community in the years that followed and the local schools and enrollments in public schools have elevated. Public input revealed that some parents believe that change is in the air. The new elementary school built in 2013 to replace the aging Brown Elementary School and to accommodate some of the increase in demand has generated positive initial feedback. Many parents and stakeholders believe that now is the time to demand higher performance, increase parental involvement, and support the local schools to be points of pride in the community.

Quality of Place: A Defining Factor

The quality of the place-based amenities and experiences a community offers its residents are not easily quantified. Whether it's education opportunities, the weather, health care, public safety, amenities, proximity to family (near or far), or other considerations, people choose to live in places for different reasons. In Smyrna, input participants overwhelmingly said they enjoy living in Smyrna and would like to continue living in the City. The "sense of community" that people feel in Smyrna was identified as the City's greatest strength by survey respondents and binds many people to the area. Location, green space, recreation opportunities, diversity of housing options, and the appearance of Smyrna as a whole garnered high ratings among quality of life characteristics. Nightlife opportunities, commuting, availability of charitable assistance, and shopping and dining opportunities were scored lower among quality of life items. Concerns over embracing diversity, leadership division, and overall engagement were also apparent from survey results. Protecting and enhancing the things residents love about the City will be important to Smyrna's future as growth and development continue.

Population Growth and Composition

Smyrna's growth, development, education, and amenities are shaping its appeal to various demographic and socioeconomic groups. Given the attractiveness of the housing market, proximity to green space, opportunities to participate in many community events, the Market Village, and proximity to job centers, it is not surprising that Smyrna is attracting a wide range of individuals and a very diverse population. One of the hallmarks of the population in Smyrna is that it is a majority-minority community, meaning less than half of residents are Caucasian, non-Hispanic. Overall, Smyrna is capturing growth from many different races and ethnicities, except the Hispanic population. Such diversity is a key strength for Smyrna and should be celebrated as the community reflects what a "new America" will look like. Many communities would envy Smyrna's position as a destination for young professionals and young families. However, as shown in previous storylines, residents and stakeholders must candidly address the flight of families with school-aged children from the community and think anew about how to change that trajectory.

Smyrna's Economic Landscape

The Great Recession wreaked havoc on the American economic landscape and the long-term trends are still unraveling. While the official end of the recessionary period occurred in June 2009, many communities are just now regaining some of the jobs that were lost. In the Smyrna area, employment declined by 10.7 percent driven by a loss of 3,538 jobs. These losses accounted for 9.7 percent of Cobb's total job loss,

slightly higher than Smyrna's share of Cobb employment in 2009 (9.1 percent). Since the end of the recession period, employment has been growing and unemployment has fallen by over five percentage points reflecting the increasing strength of the labor market in Metro Atlanta and the employability workers in Smyrna. Despite being home to a decent share of Cobb County jobs, residents tend to work in other places in the Metro. Of the workers who live in Smyrna, 48.6 percent work in Cobb County and only 17 percent work in Smyrna. Smyrna's proximity to large office markets and major corporate headquarters is a defining competitive factor, but concerns remain over the impact of increasing traffic congestion and the impact of underperformance by local public schools.

Looking to the Future: Economic Opportunities

In 2013, the Smyrna area had just over 32,000 jobs. This level represents a decrease of about one percent over the previous five years and growth of 3.1 percent over the previous 10 years. The largest sectors of economic activity are wholesale trade (13 percent), construction (11.4 percent), health care and social assistance (11.2 percent), professional, scientific, and technical services (10.7 percent), retail trade (10.7 percent), and accommodation and food service (10.4 percent). The two sectors that provided the largest shares of job growth during this period were health care and social assistance (added 1,207 jobs) and professional, scientific, and technical services (added 753 jobs). Thinking about the future, many public input respondents provided thoughts and ideas about opportunities that could help increase the economic position of Smyrna. Focus group participants representing members of the Smyrna Technology Initiative and other small business owners and managers identified opportunities related to stronger support systems for entrepreneurs and tech talent. Potential opportunities such as developing a technology incubator, better connections to Southern Polytechnic State University, Kennesaw State University, and Chattahoochee Technical College, and increased support for downtown businesses were mentioned. Moving forward, Smyrna will need to work with regional economic development organizations and stake out its economic position as it best balances growth, quality of life, and economic vibrancy.

Note: The figures provided in the Community Assessment were the most recent available data at the time they were analyzed and do not reflect any recent changes or announcements made that may impact the current or future composition of the community. The information in the Community Assessment provides a snapshot of the demographics, trends, and economic conditions in order to identify assets and challenges facing Smyrna. Please visit the City or project website for a full analysis of the findings.

APPENDIX B: CROWDFUNDING[5]

There are several crowdfunding websites that specifically target community-based projects that focus on civic improvements, such as **neighbor.ly**. Only governmental entities, neighborhood groups, and certain nonprofits are allowed to fundraise on that website. The Kansas City-based company has had success on local projects, where one neighborhood raised enough money to supplement the cost of a new playground that couldn't be fully funded through the city's budget. **Ioby** is a not-for-profit organization that is a "crowd-sourcing platform for citizen-led neighbor-funded projects" and money donated through that website is tax deductible. **Uruut**, an Atlanta-based company, is another fundraising platform for community projects, and the Ashford Park Education Foundation recently used this site to raise over $100,000 to renovate and construct an outdoor classroom and amphitheater in Brookhaven, Georgia.[6,7]

Other crowdfunding websites target various audiences depending on the platform. Some, such as **FundMe** and **Crowdraise**, are used to raise money specifically for causes and charities or those in need (several campaigns successfully raised money to pay for the medical costs of some of the victims of the Boston Marathon bombing). Other sites target investors to help launch their business or customers to fund the production of their product. **Donorschoose** is a website designed specifically to help teachers pay for supplies needed for their schoolrooms and it has helped to raise funds for thousands of classrooms. Its tagline is "Teachers ask. You choose." Teachers are able to post a project on the site where they detail the supplies needed and the expected cost, whereby donors then choose which project or projects they would like to contribute to. Projects vary from field trips to art supplies to books.

The fees for fundraising, the types of campaigns (fixed or flexible), and the success rates (measured by the percentage of projects that reach their fundraising goal) varies by crowdfunding platform. One common technique used to try to increase the success rate is by offering an incentive to make a donation, or rewards based crowdfunding. On **Kickstarter, Indiegogo**, and **Communityfunded** they often offer t-shirts, cups, donor plaques, pictures, personal notes from the campaign creator, or the product that will be made with the donation. **Crowdfunder** offers the investor a piece of the company to make a return on, also known as investment crowdfunding, while Crowdraise, the "community of do-gooders," relies on people donating out of the genuine goodness of their heart.

One of the added benefits to having a crowdfunding campaign for community-based projects is that the residents get to take a more active role in deciding which projects get funded and to personally support

[5] Additional information about other funding sources referenced in this document was not provided given the relative ease associated with accessing compiled information about the source, whether from the City or County website or another single location.
[6] Cribbs, Jonathan, "Ashford Park School Looks to Crowdfunding for New Outdoor Classroom," *Patch*, July 14, 2013, http://patch.com/georgia/brookhaven/ashford-park-school-to-use-crowdfunding-startup-for-new-outdoor-classroom#.VA3x5mMzqb0
[7] "Ashford Park School Celebrates Opening of Outdoor Classroom, Amphitheater & Plaza," *The Brookhaven* Post, May 3, 2014, http://brookhavenpost.co/ashford-park-school-celebrates-opening-outdoor-classroom-amphitheater-plaza/16202

the project through a donation. The power to decide which community projects get funded is put into the hands of the residents, stakeholders, and altruistic strangers. Further, it can be a way to close the gap between a city's budget and the costs of a community-backed project or improvement, if necessary. Because there are several options to crowdfunding websites that can be used by residents and organizations to fund personal or community-led campaigns, it is important to research the best suited crowdfunding platform for each project in order to increase the likelihood of successfully raising the necessary funds for the campaign.

Although there can be many obstacles that can delay or prevent a project from getting funded through the traditional sources, crowdfunding offers a valuable alternative to getting civic-backed projects funded and making positive changes in the community.

APPENDIX C: PERFORMANCE METRICS – ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

The indicators that are included in the performance metrics were selected based on the information that was revealed in the Community Assessment, the desired outcomes and recommended actions that are in the Vision Plan, and input from the public and Steering Committee.

Population is a strong indicator of how attractive a community is and whether or not it's a desirable place to live. Smyrna's current trend has followed a path of positive population growth. However, with the implementation of the action items in the Vision Plan, future developments and potential annexations, and the improving economy, population is expected to grow at a faster rate than it has in the past few years. There are several other core metrics that measure the overall performance of the community, rather than specific action items, such as the **total employment**, the **unemployment rate**, **median household income**, and the **poverty rate**. Those indicators measure the overall health and vitality of the community and the prosperity of its citizens, while the **percentage of residents self-employed** measures the increase in Smyrna's participation in economic development efforts and its strong support for existing and future small business owners. **Building permits**, on the other hand, tracks Smyrna's physical development patterns and building activity. Smyrna's ability to attract well-educated residents was highlighted in the Community Assessment and **the percentage of the population that has a bachelor's degree or higher** is included as an indicator to track.

The public schools in Smyrna are an important issue that came up during public input and throughout the Community Assessment, and education-related desired outcomes and actions are found in every cornerstone of the Vision Plan. As such, there are several indicators on the performance metrics table that track the improved outcomes that are anticipated from the successful implementation of the recommended actions. A large concern revealed during the Community Assessment was the mass exodus of families once their children reach middle school age, especially. The feeling that local public schools are not performing at the level they should be, and the negative perception that is sometimes associated with them has caused a hollowing out of the **population between the ages of 5 and 19** as those families move to other school districts. The Vision Plan calls for increasing parental and community involvement in the schools, which has been proven to have a positive impact on school performance measures such as **SAT scores**, **graduation rates**, and **dropout rates**.

During input, there was little discussion regarding crime and over 80 percent of survey respondents reported that they felt "safe" or "very safe" in their neighborhoods and at public places in Smyrna. Further, Smyrna had a **crime rate** lower than the comparison communities and one that decreased by more than 30 percent between 2007 and 2012. Smyrna's quality City services, such as the police and fire departments, have certainly contributed to creating a safe community. Continuing this standard is important to the Vision and should continue to be tracked.

The **percentage of commuters traveling less than 30 minutes** addresses traffic and transportation in Smyrna. During the Community Assessment, location was often mentioned as one of Smyrna's biggest assets. Smyrna is one of the few communities outside the perimeter that enjoys the best of both worlds – a small town feel and close proximity to amenities throughout the metro area. The region's large employment base is an asset for Smyrna, and many residents travel to the City of Atlanta and other metro destinations for work. However, traffic was cited as one of the biggest challenges. The number of commuters in Smyrna increased by roughly seven percent between 2007 and 2012; however, the number of commuters traveling less than 30 minutes was unchanged. In 2012, 53.6 percent of Smyrna residents that commute to work traveled less than 30 minutes from their home. A larger number of commuters had to travel longer and/or farther than they did in 2007.

The performance metrics offer a way for Smyrna to track their progress and outcomes from the action items in the Vision Plan as they are implemented. As mentioned previously, the performance metrics and activity measures in the tables are not the only indicators that should be tracked. The City currently has a variety of performance measures that are already tracked, and should continue to be tracked. Additionally, the City should be aware of any changes in certain indicators that would reveal that some of the outcomes in the Vision Plan are not being reached. For example, demographics for the community should continue to be analyzed to ensure that Smyrna is remaining a welcoming place where all residents are invited to engage in the community. A significant drop in the percentage of one race or ethnicity would merit attention and potentially a realignment of strategic priorities. The housing stock distribution should also be tracked, especially after a Housing Master Plan is conducted and the types of housing and density that is most favorable to Smyrna is decided on. While there aren't necessary numeric "goals" to reach for these indicators over the next ten years, they are important as a tool to "check the pulse" of the community and to stay on track towards full implementation of the Vision Plan.

Note: There was interest to break up the tracked age groups in the metrics based on the school level however after additional analysis Market Street felt that the age group from 5 and 19 would be best. Tracking the age group in middle school, ages 10 and 14, would not capture a drop in the number of students prior to middle school, which is historically the time with families have moved to other school districts. Additionally, there are data concerns regarding the margin of error at that level of data considering the smaller population size that would be estimated, making the data less valuable.