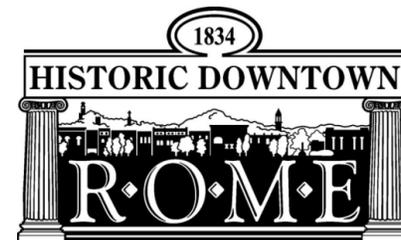


**A NEW DECADE OF
PROGRESS,
PRESERVATION AND
PARTNERSHIPS**

2005-2014

MANAGEMENT PLAN

DOWNTOWN ROME
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
(BID)



*Prepared pursuant to the State of Georgia City Business
Improvement District Act to establish a Business Improvement
District in Downtown Rome for property and business owners.
OCGA 36-43*

THE VISION

Downtown will be valued as an Economic and Historic Resource. The quality of life and sense of community experienced through the ongoing development of the city center will enrich Rome and Floyd County.

THE MISSION

To establish an equitable funding process supporting the implementation of the shared vision.

BID Committee 2003-2004

2004 Elaine Abercrombie, Chair

2003 Bruce Hunter, Chair

Harry Brock John Schroeder

Ginny Kibler Ira Levy

John Pillsbury Mimi Richards

John Massey Jackie Moreland

MANAGEMENT PLAN SUMMARY

Developed by property and business owners in Downtown, the Rome Business Improvement District Plan is designed to improve and convey special benefits to properties located within the boundaries of the BID. The Business Improvement District will provide enhanced activities and improvements, including: grants, marketing, promotion and recruitment services above and beyond those currently provided by the City.

Location:	Approximately 30 blocks.
Value of District:	The total Fair market value of the properties within the district is \$55,000,000.00 and the approximate total Assessed value is \$23,000,000.00 (Fair Market x40%).
Activities/Services:	Marketing, Promotions, Economic Development, Public Improvements, Grants and Management
Financing Method:	A levy of assessments upon the real property which benefit from the improvements and activities and a levy of a surcharge on Business license.
Budget:	Anticipated district budget from assessments on property and business license for the first year of operations is \$100,000.00.
Cost:	Annual assessments are based upon an allocation of specific program costs. One property assessment variable, Assessed Value is used in the calculation. No personal property assessments will be levied.
City Services:	Existing City services will continue to be provided within the District at the same level as before the BID creation. BID services are in addition to existing City services.
District Formation:	District formation requires submission of signed petitions from a group of property owners who either: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Collectively own at least fifty-one percent by assessed value of there real property within the district, or2. Represent at least fifty-one percent per capita of all owners of real property within the district.
Duration:	The district will have a 10-year life beginning January 1 and ending December 31. After 9 years, the petition process must be repeated for the district to continue beyond the 10 th year.
Governance:	The budgets and policies will be refined annually, within the limitation set forth in the management plan by the DDA Board of Directors, representative of the property and business owners.

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WHAT IS THE DOWNTOWN ROME BID?

The Rome Business Improvement District (BID) is a special assessment levied against properties and businesses within a defined service area. It will enable local property and business owners to finance services and improvements beyond those already provided by the City of Rome. The level of assessment is determined by property owners and merchants and governed by those who pay. Although funds are collected by the City, they are passed directly to the District to be used for BID purposes. The Rome Downtown Development Authority (DDA) primarily comprised of property and business owners will be responsible for administering the BID.

The establishment of a BID is entirely the decision of property and business owners who desire additional services and improvements. Once established, payment is mandatory, guaranteeing that everyone within the District contributes. Non-payment results in the same penalties as failure to pay real property tax. BIDs are fundamentally a legal mechanism to raise funds to enhance the management of the downtown area.

According to the International Downtown Association there are more than 1,500 property based Business Improvement Districts currently in operation throughout the United States and Canada. Within Georgia there are numerous BID communities with varied purposes and include such cities as Columbus, Americus, Cartersville, Athens, Valdosta, Albany, and Atlanta, just to mention a few.

A BID provides for an assessment on real property and business license within a specific geographic district with the proceeds providing enhanced services to the District. The Rome BID represents an important movement by property owners and business leaders to establish a well-funded organization working to ensure a positive image, supplement services, promote businesses, and market attractions and events to respond to challenges from other competitive developments within the region.

GOVERNING THE DISTRICT

Consistent with Business Improvement District legislation throughout the nation, Georgia's BID law establishes a BID governance framework that allows property owners who pay assessments to determine how the assessments are used. The following components are required within a BID governing structure.

CITY COMMISSION

Following the submission of petitions from property and business owners representing more than 51% of the assessed value and/or more than 51% of the total property owners, the City Commission holds a public hearing and then may form the BID. The BID is established by an ordinance of the Commission, with the power to levy assessment on property.

MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

The BID District budgets and policies will be refined annually, within the limitations set forth in the district management plan by the Rome DDA Board of Directors. The Board is made up of property and business owners, (or eligible designee) paying assessments within the district and representing all of the property owners and reflect the assessments being paid.

CONTRACTING FOR SERVICES

In order to supply the highest level of qualified services at the most reasonable cost, the District may contract for services with public agencies, with non-profit public service agencies or with for-profit organizations. When it is determined to be in the best interest of the District, the District may contract with non-assessment paying property owners to provide District services to those owners.

CONTINUATION OF CITY SERVICES

Throughout the process to establish the Business Improvement District, business and property owners have voiced concerns that the City of Rome maintains existing services at verifiable "baseline" service levels. A formal baseline level of service policy ensures that existing City services are enhanced and not replaced by new BID improvements and activities.

BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

It is the intent of the Historic Rome Business Association to dissolve its membership organization with the establishment of the Business Improvement District as every business will pay assessments under the Business License surcharge.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Property owners and business owners have emphasized that the assessment formula for the District must be balanced fairly and have a direct relationship between benefits received and costs. The preceding methodology is applied to a database that has been constructed by the DDA staff, reviewed by the BID Committee and approved by the Downtown Development Authority. The process for compiling the property database includes the following steps:

- Property data was obtained from the Assessor's Office and Clerk's Office.
- Assessor property data was cross checked with reliable data sources.
- City Business License data was cross checked.
- A site survey was undertaken to verify selective data.

Based upon the methodology as set forth above, property data compiled, who represent the property owners, the BID budget will yield the following assessments for the district.

ASSESSMENT RATE: \$0.003 x 100% of assessed value (Per Dollar of Assessed Value, not Fair Market Value) In future years, assessments may change, up or down, if assessed value information changes. Assessments will not exceed the limit of 3 mills.

BUSINESS LICENSE SURCHARGE: An annual rate of \$100 per business license.

BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS: Any annual budget surplus or deficit will be rolled into the following year's BID budget.

TIME AND MANNER FOR COLLECTING: As provided by state law, the Rome BID assessment will appear as a separate line item on annual property tax bills. Existing laws for enforcement and appeal of property taxes apply to the BID assessments

CURRENT AND PROPOSED USES OF THE LAND: The assessable land within the proposed district is currently being used primarily for commercial uses. No changes to land use are proposed.

RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENTS: Single-family residential property that is used exclusively as a residence will not be assessed. Multi-unit residential property will be assessed.

NON-PROFIT ASSESSMENTS: Property held in a non-profit status that does not currently pay ad valorem taxes is not required to pay BID assessments. All reasonable efforts will be made to include non-profit properties on a voluntary basis in the BID assessment.

GOVERNMENT ASSESSMENTS: Downtown Rome BID Management Plan does not assume that the City of Rome, Floyd County, or properties owned by the Federal Government and managed by the General Services Administration will pay assessments for property owned within the boundaries of the BID. Reasonable efforts will be made to include government properties on a voluntary basis in the BID assessment.

ADVANTAGES

- Designed, created, and governed by those who pay the assessment through a Board of Directors of property and business owners (or eligible designee) that supervise operations, review activity reports, and approve and monitor the annual budget.
- Administered through the Downtown Development Authority, a management organization of dedicated professionals, of those who pay.
- Authorized for a 10-year term and can be renewed through the petition process. That same petition process can end the BID should property owners decide it is no longer needed.
- The managing organization has years of experience providing a wide range of services including special events, marketing, promotion, business recruitment, maintenance, and hospitality, as well as numerous awards for accomplishments over their 24 years of existence.
- Everyone benefits and everyone pays.

WHY ESTABLISH A BID?

The Business Improvement District (BID) will play a major role in the continued excitement and remarkable growth of the downtown area, just as the original assessment did in the mid 1980s. At that time, the original BID funded Streetscape improvements that included new sidewalks, landscape and a beautiful median for Broad Street. This project was a major catalyst in the revitalization of downtown, contributing to an enthusiastic sense of pride and economic renewal.

This growth of downtown over the years since Streetscape reflects a \$90 million reinvestment in new construction and renovations, 17 restaurants, over a 100 new loft apartments with more under development, a hotel, and numerous building renovations. To support these new facilities and the people they bring to the area makes the establishment of the BID critical in maintaining the momentum, attracting new investment and expanding our customer base.

A quality of life that is second to none makes downtown a great place to grow a business, enjoy the cultural and entertainment of the region, move into a new apartment, shop in a very unique atmosphere, stroll along the river, or dine in a fine restaurant while enjoying a clean, safe, and friendly environment in historic downtown Rome.

To keep this momentum, attract new investment and protect and maintain the existing investment, property and business owners desire to establish a Business Improvement District. Property owners will assess themselves in order to maintain a private sector management district, which under Georgia law is termed a City Business Improvement District. Downtown property and business owners are taking this action because they desire to:

PROPOSED FIRST YEAR OPERATING BUDGET SUMMARY

The summary of the first full year operating budget for the Improvement District is provided below. The total improvement and activity plan budget for the first year is projected at \$100,000.00; consisting of the following components:

I. Marketing, Promotions, and Economic Development: In order to tell the story and continue to build upon the positive changes in both perception and reality that have been developed, an image, communications, economic development and marketing program, has been developed. The budget for Programs is 50% of the total District Budget.

II. Grants: In order to directly return a portion of the budget to the property and business owners a Façade and Sign Grant program will be implemented. This budget is 20% of the total budget.

III. Management and Contingency: In order to manage the day-to-day activities of the BID, an administrative staff is necessary to insure the delivery of quality services. The budget for the administration and contingency is 30% of the total District budget.

BID Proposed First Year Budget		
REVENUE		
District Property Assessment	3mills (23m)	70,000
Business License Surcharge	300 @ \$100	30,000
Total Projected Revenue		100,000
EXPENSES		
Programs (50%)		50,000
Marketing	10,000	
Business Recruitment	5,000	
Special Events	20,000	
Amenities (Banners, Benches etc)	15,000	
Grants (20%)		20,000
Façade Grant Program	10,000	
Sign Grant Program	10,000	
Management & Contingency (30%)		30,000
Total Projected Expenditures		100,000

1. Provide consistent funding for services to be provided by the BID and maintain the positive image the citizens of the community have for the downtown area. It is important to maintain this image in order to compete economically. The value of a single piece of property is not determined solely by the investments made in that property. Rather, a major portion of that property's value is derived from how investors, businesses, and visitors view the entire downtown area as a business, retail and cultural center. Property owners want to maintain the positive image.

2. Maintain Private Sector Management and Accountability. The Rome DDA will manage the BID. A Board of Directors that are representative of the property and business owners paying assessments will refine and approve the annual work plan and budget based upon this management plan. The Board of Directors are accountable to those property and business owners paying into the District will ensure the services provided by the BID are subject to very high private sector performance standards and controls.

3. Market, Promote, and Attract new Business and Investment. The District competes with shopping centers and the mall, office parks and managed areas in the region that compete for tenants, visitors and investors. To remain competitive and viable as the place to go in the region, we must maintain and finance the BID to maintain a proactive strategy to retain business and tenants as well as attract new business and investment. The events, programming, promotions, and publication of promotional materials all contribute significantly to the continued enhancement of the Downtown Image.

DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

An approximate 30 Block area has been identified for the Downtown Rome Business Improvement District. The District includes all properties within a boundary of:

The Western boundary is:

- Oostanaula River from Etowah River (Unity Point) to Riverside Parkway along the Floyd County Library Property Line
- Riverside Parkway to West Second Street to West Eight Ave

The Northern boundary is:

- Eighth Ave Southside from West Second Street to Glenn Milner Blvd
- Eighth Ave North side from West First Street to Glenn Milner

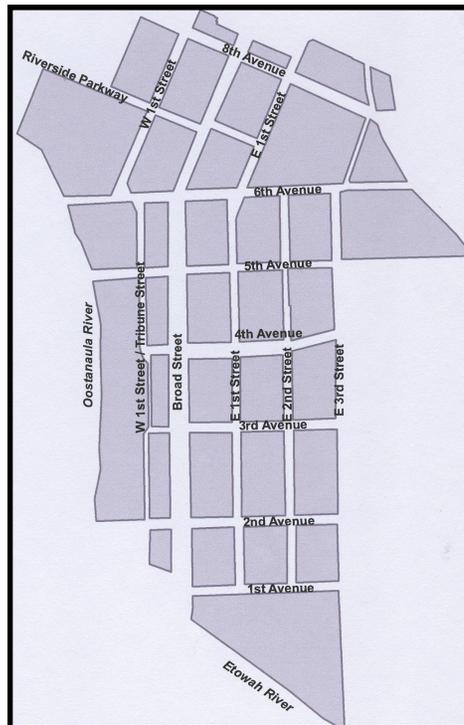
The Eastern boundary is:

- East Third Street from the Etowah River to Fifth Avenue
- Fifth Ave from Third Street to Glenn Milner
- Glen Milner from Fifth Avenue to Eighth Avenue

The Southern boundary is:

- Etowah River from East Third Street to the Oostanaula River

Specific boundaries of the Rome Downtown



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

I. PROGRAMS

50%

Marketing, Economic Development, Promotions - Each year funds will be allocated to marketing efforts, special events and business recruitment. The program developed to tell the story of change and improvement in Downtown Rome is one of the most important parts of the improvement plan. The program will include several tools to support efforts to attract and retain tenants and visitors. Some of the elements are:

- Special Events
- Consistent advertising program
- Community awareness (safety, preservation)
- Broad Street Banner Program
- Business Directory
- Building Inventory
- Public Improvement Program

II. GRANTS

20%

Façade & Sign Grants

Each year funds will be allocated to individual projects within the district on a first come first served qualifying basis. The program will establish policies and procedures for distribution of grant funds.

III. MANAGEMENT & CONTINGENCY 30%

Funds will be allocated for professional administrative support to manage the BID improvements and activities. A portion of this allocation will also go into a reserve/contingency account for unexpected projects, programs and improvements that may arise during the year. These funds will be administered by the Authority Board of Directors.