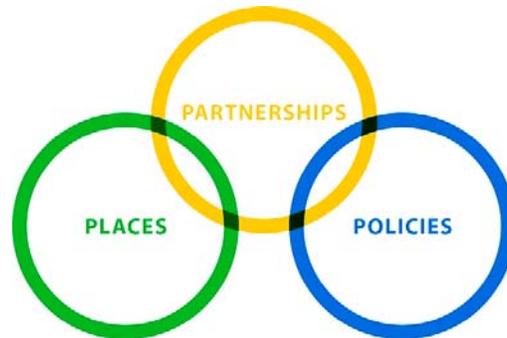


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# The Old Town Jobs Initiative

## Final Report



**Prepared for:**

**The Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation**

**Prepared by:**

**Strategy 5 LLC**

**In association with:**

**Kling Stubbins**

**Melanie O'Connell Underwood Economic Development**

**D. Cary Watkins**

**Dr. Ned Weinshenker**

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## **Section 1: Background and Introduction**

Strategy 5 LLC, an economic development consulting firm with national experience, was retained by the Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation in July 2011 to prepare the Old Town Jobs Initiative – a broad-based plan for redevelopment that includes market analysis, site analysis, observations, findings and recommendations for implementation. The objectives of the Old Town Jobs Initiative (OTJI) work program were focused on the following six components:

- Prepare a strategy for redevelopment of the area of downtown known as the Bleachery site – location of the former Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Company – that has been acquired and prepared for development by the City of Rock Hill.
- Prepare a strategy for redevelopment of a key vacant building on the Bleachery site known as the Lowenstein Building (also sometimes referred to as the Springs headquarters building); and two other vacant buildings on the site – the Power Plant and the Water Works.
- Prepare a strategy for redevelopment of other vacant or underutilized sites and buildings throughout Old Town, both in the near term and over the long term.
- Prepare a Technology Framework Plan that speaks to the issues and opportunities associated with the role of technology in the redevelopment strategies, and within the overall context of creating jobs, fostering new business development, and other goals.
- Prepare a Marketing Plan for Old Town that includes pragmatic recommendations for capturing businesses, growing businesses from within, increasing the profile of Old Town in the marketplace, and use of a “tool box” that includes the Internet, partnerships, continuing work by assigned staff and other methods to achieve attraction of tenants, investors, businesses, etc.
- Synthesize these separate strategies, tactical measures, and other interrelated elements into a cohesive redevelopment plan that is capable of yielding tangible results in the form of capital investment, job creation, and business development that can be measured over time as economic and fiscal impacts including net new property taxes, new wages and salaries, spending by operations, spending by visitors in the local economy, and return on investment to the public sector which has devoted significant resources to goal of ongoing revitalization of the Old Town area.

In order to accomplish these separate but interrelated assignments, Strategy 5 LLC assembled a multi-disciplinary team in order to most effectively address the challenge. Other members of the team included the engineering, architecture and planning firm Kling Stubbins whose primary charge was with regard to building and site assessments; Melanie O’Connell Underwood CECD whose focus was on identification of target markets; Cary Watkins with a specialty in real estate and public policy; and, Dr. Ned Weinschenker, a technology commercialization expert.

The team undertook a comprehensive scope of work that included ten separate Work Areas and approximately thirty individual tasks and sub tasks. The methodology employed in conducting the work included a review of previous reports, plans, maps and other material, independent research, data collection and analysis, repeated on-site physical inspections and tours, an extensive stakeholder interview process, use of primary and secondary data sources, review of current business and economic journals and other periodicals, and a high level of internal discussion of observations and findings.

In order to keep the client group informed during the study process, key team members and the Project Manager Ernest Bleinberger met with RHEDC staff, City of Rock Hill staff, members of the Innovation Committee (de facto steering committee for the project) and others during regular visits to Rock Hill and via phone and email correspondence. In addition, a series of 15 Technical Memoranda, or interim reports, were submitted in draft form during the study process in order to allow for course corrections, assimilation of additional input and information, and to mark progress.

The OTJI Final Report is organized into sections that:

- Summarize the organizational framework for the Initiative
- Explain the economic and market logic for the Initiative’s recommendations,
- Provide specific information, observations and findings with regard to the relevance and connectivity of the format elements
- Suggest catalyst projects and actions to be pursued in the implementation phase of work – the context of which is the next 3-5 years.

Additional technical analysis and supportive text, data, information and materials are included in a series of Appendices.

## Section 2: Framework for the Old Town Jobs Initiative

*“Create the Places that offer opportunities for entrepreneurial ventures, business development and job growth. Nurture the economic environment through cultivation of key Partnerships, and commit to a long-term effort through applied Policy decisions.”*

Ernest E. Bleinberger, Strategy 5 LLC

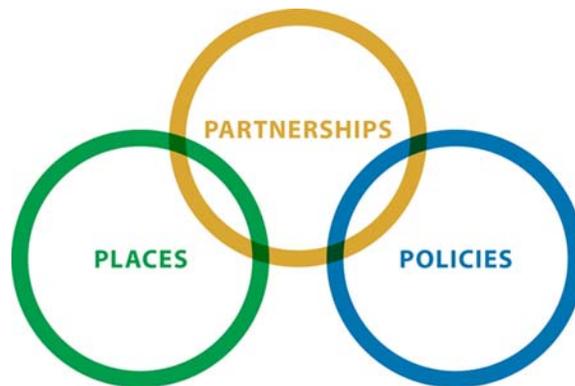
### Context Discussion

An early challenge for the team was to define the Old Town Jobs Initiative beyond the aggregation of works areas, tasks and subtasks in order to provide a guide for the study process resulting in a final product that would be pragmatic, useful, implementable, and geared toward achieving tangible results. The OTJI had to be prepared for several audiences including policy makers, economic development staff, prospective partners (including public, private and institutional entities) developers, investors, and other stakeholders in the community. This was a difficult task in its own right as the study scope, objectives, geographical designations and other elements appeared to mean different things to different people.

### Framework

As the research and analysis progressed, an organizing device, or framework, for the OTJI began to emerge. Understanding that there is a complex interrelationship between many elements at work in the economy and redevelopment assignments referenced in Section 1, there are nonetheless categories of key dynamics that serve to provide the framework for the OTJI. There are three of these categories used throughout the OTJI to explain and illustrate the economic logic, progression of analysis, relationships, and recommended actions that comprise the body of work. These categories are:

- **Places**
- **Partnerships**
- **Policies**



## **Places Overview**

To a large extent the OTJI can be seen as a real estate development plan. As such, physical locations including vacant or underutilized sites, vacant or under-tenanted buildings, and the evolving and fluid commercial real estate market all come in to play. In addition, the location of Old Town in Rock Hill, Rock Hill’s location in the greater Charlotte Regional area, and that area’s location in the nation also play a role in the economic and market forces that must be taken into account.

## **Partnerships Overview**

There are a plethora of formal and informal partnerships that currently exist between public entities such as the City of Rock Hill, York County, RHEDC, State of South Carolina etc. The same can be said for institutions such as Winthrop University, York Technical College, Clinton College, the Small Business Development Center (involving about 40 institutions of higher learning in South Carolina alone) and private sector partners such as the OKUMA Company (the world’s largest advanced manufacturing company – headquartered in Japan – that sends trainees to York Tech). The OTJI seeks to identify and form *new* partnerships that can facilitate and catalyze projects and programs that will drive job creation, business development and beneficial economic and fiscal impacts.

## **Policies Overview**

Government policies, institutional policies, corporate policies and policies of small business serve to guide our society and the economy. While policies can be burdensome and counterproductive to economic development, entrepreneurship; for small business sustainability and job creation, well crafted policies can serve to enhance and support these same elements of the OTJI. The strategy sets forth Policies for consideration that help to link Places and Partnerships, set standards that serve to strengthen the sense of place and “supply pull” economic dynamic that is critical to the OTJI. Policy recommendations can also address certain streamlining advantages, sustainable building

 **STRATEGY 5**

techniques, tax and incentive programs, and other inducement for the private sector to invest in Old Town.

The interlocking links of Places, Partnerships and Policies provides a solid foundation for the Old Town Jobs Initiative, whose various elements, components, moving parts, and implementations steps are further described herein. The 3Ps are referenced periodically, and further developed individually in the body of this Final Report document.

### **Section 3: Economic / Market Logic for the Old Town Jobs Initiative**

The economic and market logic for the Old Town Jobs Initiative is closely linked to all of the strategic and tactical elements that are included. In order for Old Town to capture and capitalize upon economic and market trends that will result in entrepreneurial development, investment and job creation, there needs to be a unifying yet flexible set of targets that are the basis for recommendations and implementation steps.

An extensive target market analysis has been completed as part of the OTJI work program, and while a wide range of businesses and opportunities could, and should, be part of the overall development paradigm in Old Town, the essential emergent theme is in new technologies. What does this mean? How does it relate to the OTJI? Why are new technologies the essential target market?

Repositioning Old Town (and in particular the former Bleachery site, Textile Corridor, etc.) as a technology center has significant implications that cut across topics included in the OTJI (Places, Partnerships and Policies) and is directly related to specific redevelopment recommendations, the Technology Framework Plan and the Old Town Marketing Plan.

The market analysis for the OTJI came to focus on four major target sectors:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Advanced Textiles / Materials
- Information/Communication Technology
- Healthcare / Health Sciences

Detailed information on these and other sectors is available in Appendix A – Target Market Analysis.

Each of these sectors provides essential advantages to the OTJI and are germane to the Places, Partnerships and Policies suggested in this report. They represent industries that are future-oriented, respond to entrepreneurialism, allow for small business development, and are closely tied to the creation of good quality jobs – the central mandate of the Old Town Jobs Initiative.

The report illustrates how Places are oriented to technology-based development; Partnerships are in many cases focused on technology, entrepreneurialism and the Knowledge Economy in South Carolina; and, how Policies can help focus resources into this area of economic development.

Focusing on technology as part of the OTJI (understanding that this crisscrosses almost all business enterprises today) also has an important connection to the Marketing Plan, branding, and other elements of the long-term strategy for Old Town. The OTJI suggests that an advantage for Old Town can be gained by re-branding for a future-oriented development effort that may include an Innovation Center, attraction of technology-heavy companies (including in the manufacturing and textile sectors) and fostering the “start-up culture” that already has a foothold in the Hive and partnerships and programs of York Technical College and Winthrop University.

While Rock Hill’s history is rich and valuable, it is also a proud record that continues to evolve every day. Once, Rock Hill was on the cutting edge of technology as large-scale textile mills and related industrial/manufacturing facilities sprang up and constituted to economic and employment base of the community. Today, that history can be revisited and reinvented for the 21<sup>st</sup> century by returning to its innovative roots and embracing modern manufacturing, the modern textile industry, health sciences and information technology and other high-tech industries. It is in a sense a case of “back to the future”.

There is ample evidence of market support, growth trends, sector-depth and other criteria in suggesting target sectors for future development in Old Town contained in the report, and specifically within Appendix A – target Market Analysis. If these sectors are successfully penetrated and cultivated, their physical presence in Old Town will have numerous spin-off benefits including demand for downtown restaurants, retail goods and retail service businesses; demand for downtown hotel rooms and other hospitality and lodging businesses; downtown residential opportunities; and will serve to attract other related businesses and enterprises into a “co-location” scenario.

The target sectors suggested by the OTJI are not the only opportunities that will emerge over time, but can provide an economic engine of sufficient power and strength to drive the significant capital investment in buildings, infrastructure and equipment that will be required to propel Old Town – an the former Bleachery sites in particular – into the active redevelopment phase. These investments, primarily by the private sector, but leveraged by public investment of precious resources, will in turn yield the desired/necessary return in economic and fiscal benefits to the City of Rock Hill, RHEDC, and other entities. This will allow for another round of reinvestment (financial and political capital) that can continue the process of transition of Old Town from its storied past into a yet-to-be-written, but surely successful future.

## **Section 4: Places Key to the OTJI**

### **Introduction and Methodology**

As summarized in Section 3, The Old Town Jobs Initiative is organized according to three interconnected links consisting of Places, Partnerships and Policies. It is the interplay between these elements that can serve to create new projects, revitalize and redevelopment key portions of Rock Hill, attract private investment capital, and ultimately create significant business development opportunities and jobs.

In this Section, 18 key Places are summarized that will have important roles in the Old Town Jobs Initiative. These brief summaries are intended to create a context for further discussion. They do not represent a comprehensive inventory of key Places in Old Town, but suggest a format that can, and should, be added to by RHEDC staff and others over time.

### **Places key to the Old Town Jobs Initiative**

The Places currently included in the OTJI discussion as summarized below, are plotted on the Figure 1 map. Please refer to this map for an understanding of location and geographic context.

- **Old Town Rock Hill - Overview**

As the Place name for the jobs strategy suggests, Old Town is a recognized area of the City of Rock Hill that pertains largely to the historic downtown core and tangential corridors, neighborhoods, commercial nodes, etc.

To some, the definition of Old Town is an area of roughly one to one and a half miles radius around City Hall located on Black St. To others, Old Town is a City of Rock Hill Zoning District that is generally contained within the 1-1.5 radial area. See Figure 1. The Strategy 5 team recognizes the validity of both definitions and has worked to accommodate each within the analysis and recommendations associated with the Old Town Jobs Initiative.

The differences in understanding and interpretation of the identifier “Old Town” within City and RHEDC staffs, policy makers, business and property owners, developers and the general public raise questions with regard to branding. Strategy 5 will seek to address the question of branding, definitions, etc. of Old Town and other interrelated areas (see discussion below) as part of the overall OTJI and the Old Town Marketing Plan specifically.

INSERT FIGURE 1 Old Town Graphic

**Textile Corridor** – Map location 1 – As with the geographic identifier Old Town, the Textile Corridor has different meanings for different individuals. In essence, the Textile Corridor is a term generally applied to a wedge shaped area of Old Town (approximately 200 acres) emanating west from the downtown core and inclusive of the City’s former concentration of textile mills and associated structures. Today, the Textile Corridor is said to include the redeveloped Cotton Factory, the Springs Creative warehouse and distribution complex, the Bleachery site (see 2 below), the Lowenstein Building (see 3 below), the Power House (see 5 below), the Water Filtering Plant (see 6 below), the City annex site (see 9 below) the planned Rock Hill Streetcar Route (see 10 below), and other important OTJI components.

As with the term “Old Town”, “Textile Corridor” is used within marketing materials and other communications reaching different audiences. It is a term that was applied to various planning and redevelopment studies including, but not limited to The Textile Corridor Master Plan completed in about 2004. While indicative of the City’s historical economic base, its use appears to contribute to the confusion associated with overlapping geographic identifiers. Clarification of terminology is further treated within the findings, observations and recommendations contained in the Old Town Marketing Plan.

INSERT IMAGE

**Bleachery Site** – Map location 2 – The Bleachery is a term generally applied to a location within the Textile Corridor (and subsequently within Old Town) that formerly hosted the main buildings of the Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Company. The slang term Bleachery was applied to this company complex based on the process through which arriving bulk textiles were cleaned, prepared for printing with designs of various types, and finished for distribution to wholesalers and retailers. The core buildings of the Bleachery were largely destroyed by fire in 2009. The site was acquired by the City of Rock Hill and has subsequently been the subject of demolition, site remediation and preparation for development. The Bleachery site is comprised of approximately 25 acres, including 20-plus acres of cleared property, the Power House (see 2.5 below), the Water Filtering Plant (see 2.6 below), and the Rock Hill Streetcar route (see 2.10 below)

INSERT IMAGE

**Downtown East** – Map location 3 – Downtown East is a significant mixed use project being developed by the Comporium Company in an area of Old Town (downtown) that is roughly defined geographically as being located at the nexus of Main St., Elizabeth St. and Black St. The project is planned to include office, retail, and hotel components and be anchored by the planned Downtown East Park which would include a signature fountain, green space, plazas and other public amenities.

INSERT IMAGE

**Lowenstein Building** – Map location 4 – The Lowenstein Building (also known as the Springs Industries Headquarters Building) represents a critical redevelopment component of the Old Town Jobs Initiative. The building is comprised of approximately 200,000 square feet of vacant space and has been the subject of a comprehensive facility assessment and redevelopment cost analysis (see Appendix B). The Lowenstein Building is located within the Bleachery site, the Textile Corridor and Old Town. It is anticipated that successful redevelopment of the Lowenstein Building will be a required catalyst for redevelopment of the remainder of the Bleachery site, and other key properties. The Lowenstein Building has been nominated for designation on the National Register of Historic Places, which in turn could provide tax incentives to developers.

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**Power House** – Map location 5 – The Power House is an iconic structure that features a 100 foot tall smokestack that calls attention to the Bleachery site in which it is located. The Power House, as the name implies, provided steam power to the Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Company. Various redevelopment scenarios have been conceptually proposed for the Power House including: micro-brewery, brew pub, restaurant, specialty retail store, etc. The Power House, along with the Water Filtering Plant and the Lowenstein Building, has been nominated for designation on the National Register of Historic Places.

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**Water Filtering Plant** – Map location 6 – The Water Filtering Plant coexists with the Power House as the remaining vestiges of the former Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Company (Bleachery). Redevelopment of the Water Filtering Plant will be important to the overall revitalization of the immediate area (Bleachery site, Textile Corridor, etc.) and could host commercial uses (restaurant, retail, etc.) as well as some public amenities (i.e. re-use of water containment ponds as future fountains or other water feature).

INSERT IMAGE

**The Good Motor Site** – Map location 7 – This site hosts a former automobile dealership and consists of approximately 4 acres positioned primarily along Dave Lyle Boulevard. The site was acquired by York County several years ago in the anticipation of potentially locating a library or other public facility. It now represents an important redevelopment opportunity for Old Town, and has been conceptualized as a location for Class A office or mixed-use projects, or development of public facilities.

INSERT IMAGE

**The Woolworth Building** – Map Location 8 – The Woolworth Building is in an important location on Main St., and is currently (winter 2011/2012) the subject of a

public/private partnership between institutional entities and developers seeking to build market rate apartments and commercial space. The commercial space (first floor / basement) could host small business development opportunity space, technology/entrepreneurial space associated with expansion of The Hive (see 2.11 below)

INSERT IMAGE

**City Annex** – Map location 9 – The City Annex consists of approximately 3 acres of land that formerly hosted portions of the City of Rock Hill’s operations department. City operations have been consolidated elsewhere, and this property now constitutes a redevelopment opportunity that could intersect with plans for the Bleachery site and related elements of the OTJI.

INSERT IMAGE

**Rock Hill Streetcar Route** – Map location 10 – The planned Rock Hill Streetcar is seen as an economic catalyst for the Textile Corridor, connecting Winthrop University with downtown, and providing access and amenities to new development that will occur in the immediate area. (MORE)

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**Town Center Mall Properties** – Map location 11 – These properties consist of open parking areas bordered by Main St., Dave Lyle Boulevard and White St. across from Good Motor Company property. The properties have been conceptualized for development as office and mixed-use projects. They are owned by the City of Rock Hill.

INSERT IMAGE

**Winthrop University Properties** – (Sites D & E have been OK’d for inclusion. We need place names and descriptions)

INSERT IMAGE

**The Hive** – (Map location 13 to be added) – The Hive Business center located on E. Main St. is a private / public partnership that affords start-up guidance and opportunities for small businesses. Primarily focused on technology, website design and marketing, and independent contract consulting, the Hive is an important Place in Old Town that could help drive further development of an Innovation Center.

INSERT IMAGE

**Saluda St.** – (Map location 14 to be added) – Saluda St. is a commercial/residential corridor that enters downtown from the southwest. It hosts various small businesses, but also contains vacant properties and redevelop opportunity sites that should be evaluated in the context of the OTJI over time. While the corridor has been the subject of

significant public investment in street infrastructure, landscaping and other improvements, economic development has been slow to take root. A targeted development strategy for the Saluda St. corridor should be considered.

INSERT IMAGE

**Top 25 Real Estate Opportunities** – (Map locations to be added and maintained) – This sub-section is intended to provide the framework for an open-ended section of the OTJI and Old Town Marketing Plan that is designed to be maintained on a regular basis. The framework includes the following five key elements:

- The selection of a preliminary inventory of commercial real estate listings that may, or may not, be listed with a local brokerage, but that contribute to the economic base of Old Town.
- An arrangement between RHEDC/City of Rock Hill and the local/regional commercial real estate brokers that allows for cross marketing of properties, financial reward to brokers, and economic reward to the public sector.
- Maintenance of the Top 25 list on a regular basis, additions/subtractions from the location points included on the Rock Hill USA website and the Bleachery website that is now under development.
- Utilization of the technology being incorporated into the Bleachery website that allows an individual to see Google Earth perspectives, etc., obtain site-specific information, and link to the commercial real estate industry.
- Bi-weekly information updates to the commercial real estate industry and a reciprocal arrangement that provides for gathering information/input from the industry.

## **Section 5: Partnerships Key to the OTJI**

### **Introduction and Methodology**

The furtherance of strategic partnerships between the public, private and institutional sectors is a *critically important component* of the Old Town Jobs Initiative. These partnerships include five basic types:

- Existing partnerships that can be strengthened or expanded
- New partnerships that can serve to cultivate and utilize economic assets
- New partnerships that combine resources to create catalyst projects; and,
- Multi-party partnerships that will serve to achieve the long term marketing goals and objectives for Old Town
- Multi-party partnerships that will result in creating new and innovative businesses and lasting job growth

Information contained in this Section has been acquired from various primary and secondary data sources, websites, marketing materials, and stakeholder interviews. Where appropriate, vision statements and other information have been taken directly from official websites or available printed materials. Observations and recommendations contained in this Section represent the professional opinions of Strategy 5 LLC unless otherwise stated.

### **Partnership Overview**

This Section conveys a summary of partnership entities and programs that can and should be merged and utilized for the benefit of Old Town and the jobs initiative which is the subject of this report. Where possible, Strategy 5 has suggested one or more ways in which a partnership can affect positive change in Old Town. This discussion is further expanded within Section 10: OTJI Implementation Steps. The partnership summary is broken out into the following categories: Public sector; Institutional sector; and, Private sector. This summary includes individual discussions of the following prospective partners:

- United States Federal Government
- State of South Carolina
- City of Rock Hill
- Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation
- York County

- Charlotte Regional Partnership
- Catawba Regional Council of Governments (COG)
- Winthrop University
- York Technical College
- South Carolina Small Business Development Center
- South Carolina Research Authority
- South Carolina SmartState Program
- Commercial Real Estate Brokers and Agents
- Real Estate Development / Investment Industry
- Comporium
- Springs Creative
- OKUMA
- Williams and Fudge
- The Hive
- Banks and Credit Unions
- Rock Hill Business / Technology Park and BTC companies
- Other companies and Small Businesses

Contact information has been included for public sector and institutional partners where available. Contact information for private partners has not been included pending permission to include such information and/or RHEDC policy decisions regarding same. The consultant believes that contact information is an important element in making the OTJI a usable “handbook” as part of the overall marketing and implementation plan.

### **Public Sector Partnership Opportunities**

This Section includes a summary discussion of public sector entities that could be involved in partnerships that further the goals and objectives of the Old Town Jobs Initiative, and related redevelopment efforts. Successful redevelopment requires the leveraging of scarce public resources to generate significant private sector investment. As such, the following partners represent opportunities for funding in some cases, but there are layers of additional benefit that could come from networking, sharing of information and experience, access to skills and experience, and other beneficial elements. The Public Sector Partner Opportunities are presented in a top-down format.

#### **United States Federal Government**

The U.S. Government, particularly the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) offer partnership opportunities in a variety of formats. To quote the EDA Mission Statement: *“To lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy.”* The EDA should be considered a potential partner, particularly when viewing the economic development

paradigm from the top down. Programs such as the *Jobs & Innovation Accelerator Challenge* may be a target for Rock Hill if an Innovation Center concept is pursued. There are currently 20 facilities around the country benefiting in one way or another from this program, although currently there appear to be none in South Carolina.

Grant and funding programs for planning and development, and a plethora of interrelated opportunities linking state and local governments should be mined by the RHEDC and the City of Rock Hill. While Rock Hill has an existing relationship with the Federal government, as a partnership under the Old Town Jobs Initiative, Strategy 5 suggests that additional support may be acquired and utilized under a more intensive cultivation of this resource.

Contact Information:

EDA Headquarters  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave. NW, Ste. 7800  
Washington, D.C. 20230  
(202) 482-4085 Office of Public Affairs

South Carolina Representative  
Robin Cooley  
1835 Assembly Street, Ste. 1075  
Columbia, SC 29201  
(803) 253-3640  
Email: [rcooley@eda.doc.gov](mailto:rcooley@eda.doc.gov)

**State of South Carolina / South Carolina Department of Commerce, etc.**

The State of South Carolina has numerous departments and programs that crisscross the economic development strategies of the federal government, state government, and county and city governments. The leading partner in this effort is the South Carolina Department of Commerce which effectively serves as a marketing arm of the state, and should be closely allied with the marketing and redevelopment goals and objectives of the RHEDC and the Old Town Jobs Initiative. The SCDC promotes the pro-business environment, workforce, infrastructure, research and innovation, incentives, small business support, locations (especially important for Old Town), affordable energy, international profile and quality of life in South Carolina.

Understanding that today's market is global in nature, the SCDC maintains international offices in Europe and Asia, and is at least partially responsible for more than 700 overseas firms having facilities in South Carolina such as Michelin (see Technical Memorandum 2 – Innovation Centers) Fujifilm, Bosch, GlaxoSmithKline, BMW, etc. The SCDC also maintains the South Carolina Coordinating Council for Economic Development “*in response to a general need for improved coordination of economic*

*development efforts by those state agencies involved in the recruitment of new business and the expansion of current enterprises throughout the state.”* The Council consists of the heads or board chairs of 11 state agencies engaged in economic development activity: S.C. Department of Commerce, State Ports Authority, S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, S.C. Department of Agriculture, S.C. Technical College System (see Section 4.2 York Technical College) S.C. Research Authority (See Technical Memorandum 2 – Innovation Centers), S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, S.C. Department of Revenue, Jobs for Economic Development Authority, S.C. Department of Transportation.

While the RHEDC and the City of Rock Hill have a long standing relationship with the South Carolina Department of Commerce, Strategy 5 suggests that additional partnership opportunities benefiting Old Town and the desired private sector investment/job creation may be revealed through a thorough review of the department, its programs, its extended partnerships etc. This should not be a one-time research exercise, but part of a regular and on-going effort linked to the Old Town Marketing Plan, and specific redevelopment targets (e.g. the Lowenstein Building and the former Bleachery site).

Contact Information:

South Carolina Department of Commerce  
1201 Main St. Suite 1600  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201-3200  
(803) 737-0400

**South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce**

The SCDEW coordinates with private and public sector entities across the state to provide job opportunities and workforce services. In order to promote stable employment and economic growth, the SCDEW tracks trends and statistics, and connects employers and job seekers in the true spirit of productivity.

Contact Information:

SC Works Catawba  
Sharon Blackburn  
Project Director  
1228 Fincher Rd.  
Rock Hill, SC 29731  
(803) 328-3117

## City of Rock Hill

The City of Rock Hill has a long history of economic development extending back in time to the boom in the textile industry in the United States, through a difficult transition when that industry (along with many other manufacturing sector enterprises in the nation) migrated overseas, to the renaissance associated with a growing population, retail and commercial growth (especially along the I-77 Corridor). The City of Rock Hill (esp. the Department of Urban and Economic Development) and the Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation (see Section 3.4 below) have partnered with the private sector to develop business/technology parks, fostered significant catalyst projects such the Giordana Velodrome, and, especially germane to the Old Town Jobs Initiative – taken ownership of the former Bleachery site and invested significant capital and human resources in its redevelopment.

The Department’s mission is to: *“Sustain and expand the City’s role as a location for economic activity so as to benefit the City and its residents through the creation of new jobs, expansion of the tax base and growth in utility revenues.”* The Department has approximately 15 Strategic Goals that link closely with (and otherwise includes) the Old Town Jobs Initiative. These include:

- Attraction of high-quality jobs and business to Rock Hill, particularly manufacturing, corporate office and distribution facilities
- Attraction of residents, businesses, jobs and investment to Old Town
- Create destinations and marketing programs designed to attract visitors to Rock Hill
- Develop community amenities that provide diverse opportunities for local residents that keep Rock Hill competitive within the Charlotte region for quality businesses and jobs

The City of Rock Hill and the Department of Urban and Economic Development maintain a website: [www.RockHillUSA.com](http://www.RockHillUSA.com) that features information and materials of interest to prospective business owner/operators, future/prospective residents, etc, and a limited listing of development opportunity sites. The latter are mainly limited to references to the City’s business parks. As part of the Old Town Marketing Plan (to come) Strategy 5 will recommend that a more cohesive and comprehensive cross-referencing of real estate development and leasing opportunities be incorporated into the City/RHEDC website presence and communication network.

Contact Information:

Mr. Stephen Turner  
Department Head  
City of Rock Hill  
155 Johnston St.  
Rock Hill, South Carolina 29731-1706  
(803) 329-7090

Business Park Marketing Manger  
Mr. Rick Norwood  
(803) 326-3835

### **Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation**

The Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation (RHEDC) is, according to its website: *“A non-profit organization committed to representing the business, educational and community interests of the City while promoting jobs and supporting growth. The purpose of the RHEDC is to further economic growth and development of business matters, including small business concerns within the City of Rock Hill. It is committed to promoting and assisting in the development of residential housing in the City of Rock Hill. The principal objective of the Corporation is to benefit the City economically by fostering increased employment opportunities and by expansion of business and industry, thereby lessening the burdens of government and combating community deterioration.”* The stated Strategic Goals of the RHEDC are basically the same as for the Department of Urban and Economic Development (see above) which demonstrates the intertwined nature of the Department and the Corporation, their policy and operational commonalities, and to some extent the overlap in roles that may in some circumstances lead to confusion.

Development corporations emerged as public sector revitalization tools in the 1970’s in response to the need for large-scale real estate development efforts in cities across America. The RHEDC has been instrumental in the development of the City’s Business/Technology Parks, use of tax increment financing and other funding and incentive tools to achieve tangible redevelopment results. Non-profit development corporations are typically granted arms-length autonomy from state, regional or local government entities so that they may function efficiently as real estate “surrogate developers” able to buy and sell property, and enter into leases or other agreements with the private sector.

The role of the RHEDC in implementing the Old Town Jobs Initiative is a critical one. This topic and associated observations, findings and recommendations are further treated in Section 5: Policies, and Section 10: Implementation Steps.

Contact Information:

Mr. Stephen Turner  
Director  
Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation  
155 Johnston St.  
Rock Hill, South Carolina 29731-1706  
(803) 329-7090

**York County**

York County is comprised of nine municipalities, including the City of Rock Hill, and is one of the fastest growing counties in the State of South Carolina. It also functions as a critical marketing conduit between the U.S. Economic Development Authority, South Carolina Department of Commerce, Charlotte Regional Partnership, the City of Rock Hill, and – ultimately – Old Town. York County and the City of Rock Hill have many intergovernmental agreements, policies, and programs that essentially create a symbiotic relationship. York County owns property in Old Town (see Section 3:10 - Places – Good Motor Company Site) and has a vested interest in the economic redevelopment of the area. Conversely, the City of Rock Hill and Old Town have a vested interest in mutual economic development goals with the County.

York County maintains site location information that includes development opportunities in the City of Rock Hill, but which is not focused on the redevelopment challenges associated with Old Town, the Textile Corridor and the Bleachery site. Better coordination and cooperation within the “top down” marketing paradigm is an essential element of the Old Town Marketing Plan (See Section 8)

Contact Information:

J. Mark Farris, CEcD  
Director  
York County Economic Development  
1830 Second Baxter Crossing  
Fort Mill, SC 29708  
(803) 802-4300  
Email: [mark.farris@yorkcountygov.com](mailto:mark.farris@yorkcountygov.com)  
Website: [www.ycedb.com](http://www.ycedb.com)

## **Charlotte Regional Partnership**

The Charlotte Regional Partnership is a non-profit, public/private economic development organization that leverages regional resources to market the 16-county Charlotte region – which includes York County, South Carolina. The City of Rock Hill is not currently a member of the Charlotte Regional Partnership.

According to the Partnership’s website: *“The Partnership serves as a catalyst for government/business collaboration to market and promote Charlotte USA as a highly competitive, vibrant region with an increasingly attractive quality of life. Although each of the 16 counties has its own strength, each experiences greater economic success – and is more competitive – by working together rather than alone.”*

The Charlotte Regional Partnership maintains data and information on workforce characteristics and availability, comparative cost of doing business, target market sectors, transportations, industry contact lists, and real estate development opportunities among other valuable resources. The Charlotte Regional Partnership interfaces with York County in marketing activities, but is somewhat disconnected from the City of Rock Hill and its goals and objectives for redevelopment of Old Town.

### Contact Information:

Charlotte Regional Partnership  
NASCAR Plaza  
550 S. Caldwell St. Ste. 760  
Charlotte, NC 28202  
1-800554-4373

## **Catawba Regional Council of Governments (COG)**

The Catawba Regional COG is an association of South Carolina local governments in Chester, Lancaster, Union and York counties. The COG serves as a forum for intergovernmental cooperation and as a central staffing source resource for grant writing, land use and transportation planning, economic development, workforce investment, GIS mapping services, information systems and project management.

COG has been working with the U.S. EDA (see Section 3.1 above) since 1975 to annually develop a *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* for the four-county region. This planning process, which involves an analysis of the region’s economy and a listing of needed/proposed projects, enables the region to be certified to participate in EDA programs. The primary grant program available from EDA is the Public Works Program, through which funds are made available to local governments and service districts to provide needed infrastructure (water and sewer) to serve new or expanding businesses. Under the OTJI, the City of Rock Hill/RHEDC should maximize any and all grant opportunities that might further the redevelopment goals and objectives associated

with the Lowenstein Building, former Bleachery site, Textile Corridor and Old Town at large.

Contact Information:

Catawba Regional Council of Governments  
Executive Director  
Randy Imler  
215 Hampton St.  
Rock Hill, SC, 29731

(803) 327-9041

### **Institutional Partnership Opportunities**

Institutional partners are universities, colleges, educational entities, non-profits, and others that can bring a unique set of perspectives and resources to an economic development effort. In some cases they are hybrids with the public and or private sector being part of their charters, or practical administration of operations. The summary of institutional partners included here does not constitute a comprehensive inventory of opportunities, but demonstrates a solid base from which benefits may be derived for the Old Town Jobs Initiative and associated Marketing Plan and Implementation Steps.

#### **Winthrop University**

Winthrop University is an integral partner with the Rock Hill community. Founded in 1886, Winthrop is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelors, masters and specialist degrees. A total of 41 undergraduate and 25 graduate degree programs are available in the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Business Administration, the Richard W. Riley College of Education, and the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

Winthrop University has continued to grow its campus facilities and amenities, and has also increased its outreach into the community in recent years. This outreach has manifest itself in the College Town Action Plan, involvement in public/private joint ventures such as The Hive (see Section 4.5.8 below), and expressions of interest in the concept of an Innovation Center coupled with redevelopment efforts associated with the former Bleachery site.

Partnership opportunities could include, but not be limited to, redevelopment of sites with the private sector as noted above, programmatic opportunities for students to participate in entrepreneurial and small business development opportunities at the Hive, and in other locations that may be developed as part of the Old Town Jobs Initiative. As host for the Small Business Development Center of South Carolina at Winthrop University, the institution is well placed to further cultivate the network of more than 40 universities and

colleges in the state that seek to encourage entrepreneurialism and job growth through the SBDC (see Section 4.4.4 below)

Contact Information:

(INSERT AS APPROPRIATE)

### **York Technical College**

As a potential institutional partner in the Old Town Jobs Initiative, York Technical College may represent one of the most viable candidates for participation in redevelopment activities based on its focus on job training and job creation. York Technical College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Located in Rock Hill, YTC serves the counties of York, Lancaster and Chester, with seven training locations.

The College has approximately 9,000 students enrolled in credit programs, and 10,000 enrolled as continuing education students in a combination of 89 degree, diploma and certificate programs. Taken together, the student body represents a significant and important element of the educated and trained regional workforce, as well as candidates for entrepreneurial business development and participation in the economic future of Old Town. As the College's mission statement attests: "*Building our community through maximizing student success*" is in sync with the long-term job creation and business development goals and objectives of the Old Town Jobs Initiative.

York Tech's academic divisions include:

- Business and Computers / Arts and Sciences
- Health and Human Services
- Industrial Engineering Technology
- Corporate and Continuing Education

Each of these divisions and the programs and curriculum they contain are germane to the Old Town Jobs Initiative and its recommendations for Places, Partnerships and Policies. York Technical College's involvement with Advanced Manufacturing (and private sector partner OKUMA – see Section 5.5.7 below) is consistent with the Old Town Jobs Initiative's recommendation to target this sector for various development/redevelopment projects. These projects could include, but not be limited to participation in development of an Innovation Center and/or other entrepreneurial and business start-up facilities.

Contact Information:

Joanne Zukowski, Ed.D.  
Associate Vice President  
Economic and Workforce Development  
York Technical College



452 S. Anderson Rd.  
Rock Hill, SC 29730  
(803) 325-2873  
Email: [jzukowski@yorktech.edu](mailto:jzukowski@yorktech.edu)  
Website: [www.yorktech.edu](http://www.yorktech.edu)

## **ReadySC**

A division of the South Carolina Technical College System, Ready SC serves to link the 16 tech college institutions with the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, South Carolina Local and Regional Economic Development Organizations, South Carolina State government, Regional Councils of Government, technology organizations and workforce training and development programs.

## **South Carolina Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Winthrop**

The Winthrop Region Small Business Development Center is part of a large network of SBDCs throughout the state. The Centers offer free one-on-one counseling sessions to assist current business owners, as well as helping entrepreneurs and start-ups develop business plans. The SBDCs also offer advice on expansion possibilities and host workshops on starting a business, taxes and legal requirements, franchising, marketing, establishing a web presence and other valuable knowledge.

The Winthrop Regional SBDC serves 15 counties from three offices: Rock Hill, Florence and Conway; and is a part of the greater South Carolina SBDC which contains more than 40 university/college/government partnerships. The stated mission of the South Carolina SBDC is: *“to advance South Carolina’s economic development by helping entrepreneurs grow successful businesses.”* Its stated vision: *“The SC SBDC is recognized as the gateway and proven provider of small business assistance that drives entrepreneurial growth.”*

The SBDC system is linked to the U.S. Small Business Administration which provides partial funding for the program, and low-interest business loan assistance, grants and other resources for small business owners and operators.

2010 SBDC Economic Impacts included: 2,735 jobs created and saved; \$54,700,000 in capital formation; \$117,900,000 in government contract awards; 105 new businesses started; 6,096 individual served

### Contact Information:

Rock Hill SBDC  
Winthrop University  
Larry Stevens  
Regional Director  
118 Thurmond Building  
Rock Hill, SC 29733



(803) 323-2283

Email: [stevensl@winthrop.edu](mailto:stevensl@winthrop.edu)

Website: [Winthroregionalsbdc@gmail.com](mailto:Winthroregionalsbdc@gmail.com)

State Director's Office

Michele Abraham, State Director

University of South Carolina

Moore School of Business

1705 College St.

Columbia, SC 29208

(803) 777-4907

[www.SCBDC.com](http://www.SCBDC.com)

### **South Carolina Research Authority (SCRA)**

The SCRA is a non-profit organization created by the South Carolina General Assembly in 1983. The Research Authority manages federal research projects and collaborates with industry and universities to promote high-tech development. According to SCRA's CEO Bill Mahoney the Authority has a dual mission:

- "We deliver technology solutions – typically through applied research collaborations – to improve the mission effectiveness of Federal agencies and the business execution of Corporations."
- "We develop the Knowledge Economy by helping grow companies and create jobs."

In support of both missions SCRA builds and manages research facilities that include wet labs, secure rooms for sensitive work and advanced high-tech manufacturing shops. The dual mission and support role of SCRA are consistent with the goals and objectives of the OTJI and are particularly applicable to the Innovation Center concept that is proposed by Strategy 5, but also relevant to target markets such as Advanced Manufacturing.

SCRA has been involved in the development of three Innovation Centers in South Carolina:

- The SCRA MUSC Innovation Center at Charleston – A state-of-the-art research and business facility with lab spaces designed to support medical and bioscience research.
- The SCRA USC Innovation Center at Columbia – A redeveloped facility designed to accommodate business offices and clean next-generation manufacturing operations.

- The SCRA / Duke Energy Innovation Center – A facility designed to attract corporate tenants and entrepreneurial start-up companies, especially those focused on advanced materials, which benefit from proximity to Clemson University’s Advanced Materials Research Laboratory.

SCRA’s interest in rapid application of new technologies to manufacturing and other sectors make it a potentially key partner for the City of Rock Hill / RHEDC and the successful implementation of the OTJI – particularly as the latter connects with redevelopment plans, and the creation of an Innovation Center to catalyze said redevelopment.

### **South Carolina Launch**

South Carolina Launch is an SCRA collaboration that bills itself as “South Carolina’s Knowledge Economy Engine”. It provides a wide range of services and support to grow and attract knowledge-based companies and high wage-earning jobs.

### **South Carolina “SmartState Program”**

The South Carolina SmartState Program was established by the South Carolina General Assembly in 2002, funded through South Carolina Lottery proceeds. The legislation authorizes the state’s three public research institutions: Medical University of South Carolina, Clemson University and the University of South Carolina, to use state funds to create Centers of Economic Excellence in research areas that will advance South Carolina’s economy. While Rock Hill is not host to one of these three research institutions, there may still be partnership opportunities that could direct funds and other resources to Old Town – particularly in the context of establishing an Innovation Center.

Each Center of Economic Excellence is awarded from \$2 million to \$5 million in state funds, which must be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis with non-state funds. The program also supports SmartState endowed chairs, world-renowned scientists who lead the Centers. By investing in talent and technology, the SmartState Program is designed to fuel the state’s knowledge-based economy, resulting in higher paying jobs and an improved standard of living in South Carolina. The Program is a magnet for outside investment. To date the Program has resulted in more than \$400 million dollars in non-state investment.

Contact Information:

Dr. Argentini Anderson  
Program Manager  
Academic Affairs and Licensing  
(803) 737-2276  
Email: [aanderson@che.sc.gov](mailto:aanderson@che.sc.gov)

### **South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership**

The SCMEP is a private, non-profit group that serves as a proven resource to South Carolina businesses, providing them with a range of innovative strategies and solutions to strengthen leadership, develop competencies, drive growth and eliminate waste. An affiliate of the National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST), SCEMP operates under the U.S. Department of Commerce to promote innovation and industrial competitiveness. SCMEC provides business consulting services including Six Sigma Training programs. SCMEP reported a \$277 million economic impact for 2010.

Contact Information:

(800) 637-4634

### **Private Sector Partner Opportunities**

Private sector partners for the Old Town Jobs Initiative could literally come from around the world given global market realities, technology, competitiveness/desirability of South Carolina and Rock Hill, etc. In this Section we have focused on local private partners, although many have business connections and networks that do indeed span the globe. This summary of private sector partner opportunities does not constitute a comprehensive inventory, but rather suggests the depth and breadth of such opportunities that are available for further cultivation and application to the Old Town Jobs Initiative.

### **Commercial Real Estate Brokers and Agents**

One of the most critical partnerships to be pursued, enhanced, cultivated and monitored over the long-term for the benefit of the Old Town Jobs Initiative is with the local and regional commercial real estate industry. No other partnership, over time, can achieve the tangible results of tenanted space, developed property, creation of Places for businesses, jobs and capital investment to grow. Further interaction with organizations such as the Charlotte Regional Realtor Association would be considered a desirable extension of the private partnership suggested herein.

### **Real Estate Development / Investment Industry**

Second in importance to the commercial real estate brokerage industry, but inexorably linked to it, is the real estate development sector. For redevelopment goals and objectives associated with the Old Town Jobs Initiative to be achieved, it is imperative that partnerships with the private real estate development community be forged. The Lowenstein Building, the former Bleachery site, underutilized City-owned parcels, University-owned parcels, parcels and development tracts throughout Old Town – many of which are currently unidentified in any single “clearing house” (see Section 3.18 – Top 25 Real Estate Opportunities) will require the investment of private capital and the

application of experience, creativity, and a pragmatic response to economic/market realities.

Despite the economic recession and the soft real estate market, developers are still seeking good opportunities to make a reasonable return on investment. Several of these opportunities are suggested within the “Places” discussion, but may also be positively influenced by “Partnerships” that can bring aggregate resources to the table. These resources may include outright funding participation, guaranteed leases, prestigious anchor tenancy, increased demand from user groups, leveraged demand, name/brand recognition, and other value-added aspects of participation. The “Policies” section of the Old Town Jobs Initiative will also speak to the need for Partnerships with the real estate development sector.

Further interaction with organizations such as the Urban Land Institute, which has many real estate developers as members, would be considered a desirable extension of this partnership opportunity.

### **Comporium**

Comporium is a diversified telecommunications company providing residential as well as business customers, local telephone, long distance, wireless, cable TV, Internet and security products. The company also provides directory publishing and security monitoring services to industry customers across the country. Comporium is also a significant participant in community relations with approximately three-quarters of a million dollars donated to education, health and wellness, arts and culture, sports and recreation and other support.

As the primary telecommunications service provider in Rock Hill, Comporium will naturally play an integral role in the Technology Framework Plan developed for the Old Town Jobs Initiative (see Section 6). From an infrastructure/hardware perspective Comporium has the demonstrated capacity to provide any technology that may be required by a prospective development/business venture and/or could acquire/create it if necessary.

Comporium is currently planning an important mixed-use development in Old Town (Downtown East) that will create the opportunity for a number of public, institutional and private partners to converge. In addition, Comporium could play an integral role in the development of an Innovation Center which could hold significant, long-term benefits for the Textile Corridor redevelopment effort, as well as spin-off development over time that could help sustain economic and job growth throughout Old Town.

## **Banks and Credit Unions**

Financial institutions including banks, credit unions and other lenders are always critical partners in any economic development initiative – particularly a redevelopment plan such as incorporated into the Old Town Jobs Initiative. Rock Hill has several key institutions with which developers, business, entrepreneurs and others have the opportunity to partner. Particular among them are Family Trust Credit Union which has plans to develop a new headquarters building in Old Town (Textile Corridor in proximity to the former Bleachery site) thus demonstrating the company’s commitment to the redevelopment effort and the future of Old Town. Also important are Wells Fargo Bank which now occupies a historic downtown building, Bank of America, First Citizens Bank, Palmetto Bank, Bank of York, Provident Community Bank, etc.

## **OKUMA**

OKUMA is currently a key private sector partner with York Technical College (see Section 4.4.2) and is a participant in the SmartState Program (see Section 4.4.7). Okuma America Corporation is the U.S.-based affiliate of Okuma Corporation, a world leader in the development of computer numeric controls (CNC) and machining technology, founded in 1898 in Nagoya, Japan. Okuma America began U.S. operations in 1984 and moved to its present location in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1987. The Charlotte location is the headquarters for the manufacturing and training facilities for North and South American operations.

Okuma is known for its technology leadership and world-class manufacturing, product quality and dedication to customer service. Okuma products are used in the automotive, aerospace and defense industries, construction and farming equipment, oil and energy, medical, mold and die, and fluid power industries. Machines include vertical and horizontal machining centers, lathes, double column machining centers, grinders, and wheel machines that offer users high throughput, high accuracy, and reliable solutions to production machining operations.

Okuma utilizes York Technical College as a training center, and interfaces with the institution’s Center for Advanced Manufacturing. Strategy 5 sites Advanced manufacturing as a prime target market sector for pursuit in the redevelopment plan associated with the Old Town Jobs Initiative (see Appendix A – Target Market Analysis) and Okuma could play a logical role in the development of an Innovation Center (see Section 7 – Innovation Center Concept Discussion).

## **Springs Creative**

Springs Creative Products Group is an independent fabric and crafts business with a history that began nearly 40 years ago. The company has a client base of major fabric retailers and specialty manufacturers across the United States and throughout the world. Springs Creative is housed in the Cotton Factory in Old Town (Textile Corridor) Rock Hill, a prototypical redevelopment success story, as well as in a nearby warehouse and distribution center. In addition Springs Creative represents a model associated with Advanced Manufacturing and Advanced Textiles (see Appendix A – Target Market Analysis) that may offer additional development/business opportunities in Old Town, the Textile Corridor and the former Bleachery site. The latter location would offer potential co-location opportunities for businesses that interface with Springs Creative.

### **Williams and Fudge**

Williams and Fudge is an account receivables management company specializing in student loans from colleges, universities and related programs. Importantly, Williams and Fudge was an integral component of the successful redevelopment of the Cotton Factory and is one of Rock Hill's largest employers. As with Springs Creative, Williams and Fudge has helped to demonstrate how a modern, technology-driven business can partner with the City of Rock Hill, RHEDC, etc. to achieve a significant proto-typical redevelopment objective – the reactivation of the Cotton Factory.

### **The Hive**

The Hive is a web communications and marketing workforce development/small business incubation program in Old Town that is a partnership between York Technical College, RevenFlo Web Marketing, Becca and Harry Dalton, City of Rock Hill, Comporium Communications, and Winthrop University. As such, the Hive is a perfect example of a working Partnership (public, private, institutional) that the OTJI seeks to encourage and replicate on a successively larger scale.

The Hive provides administrative services directly to start-up companies. Students gain experience working on real-world projects for local organizations as they learn and develop their skills as web developers, web marketers and graphic designers while earning credit. Participating non-profit and publicly funded organizations receive the benefit of high-quality content management and assisting in economic development for the community.

The Hive is currently (winter 2011/2012) developing a dedicated website for the former Bleachery site. Strategy 5 recommends that this platform be used to incorporate various elements of the Old Town Marketing Plan and other implementation steps of the Old Town Jobs Initiative.

Contact Information:

Mr. Jason Broadwater  
RevenFlo

125 Caldwell St. Ste. 102  
Rock Hill, SC 29730  
(803) 328-6033

### **Rock Hill Business / Technology Park / BTC Companies**

The Rock Hill Business / Technology Park and the Rock Hill Business Technology Center (BTC) host approximately 100 individual companies in a variety of sectors that could play partnership roles in the Old Town Jobs Initiative. The evident sectors include (in alphabetical order):

- Advanced manufacturing
- Fasteners and filters
- Financial and insurance services
- Food service, production and distribution
- Information technology
- Medical devices
- Manufacturing
- Machining / tool and die
- Optics
- Plastics and chemicals
- Telecommunications
- Web marketing and internet services
- Wood and paper products

The companies operating in these and other sectors represent three key opportunities for Old Town:

1. They are candidates for expansion or diversification which could be captured by development opportunities in the Textile Corridor and elsewhere.
2. They should be view as conduits to a global network of industries, established companies with relocation/expansion objectives, a connection to spin-offs and entrepreneurial start-ups that could be candidates for an Innovation Center.
3. They demonstrate the success of the Business Park model in Rock Hill which can be replicated on a smaller scale on the former Bleachery site former Good Motor Company site, Town Center sites, etc. pursuant to Multi-County Industrial Park designation.. This model involved a public / private partnership that included the RHEDC, City of Rock Hill, private companies, and the commercial real estate industry.

## **Other Private Companies and Small Businesses**

Given an opportunity that includes the nexus between Places, Partnerships and Policies, almost any company or business represents a potential partner in Old Town redevelopment and the related Old Town Jobs Initiative. A complete inventory of potential business partners is beyond the scope of this report, although staff should be assigned the task of expanding this list along with similar lists for the public and institutional sectors summarized herein. A sample of businesses and/or sectors that should be included in the private partner category include but are not limited to the following:

- Established Web marketing firms such as RevenFlo and start-ups that emerge from the Hive and other incubation centers such as the South Carolina SBDC, as well as regional centers with a similar mission
- Hotel development/operating companies and other businesses associated with the hospitality and lodging sector. There are about a dozen key hotel companies operating in Rock Hill, although no hotel currently exists in Old Town, although one is proposed for Comporium's Downtown East project.
- Professional service firms including law offices, accountants, architects and engineers, graphic design and media companies, advertising and marketing firms, real estate brokers, health care professionals including doctors and dentists, consulting firms, insurance agencies, etc.
- Internet retail and distribution firms like Insignia Group that have a national/international business base, but prefer to locate and live in Rock Hill.
- Traditional retail and service retailers including restaurants, pharmacies, dry cleaners, bank branches, etc. and destination retail such as sporting goods, music and musical instruments, specialty electronics, antique shops.

## **Summary Conclusions**

Clearly, there are a significant number of Partnership opportunities associated with the Old Town Jobs Initiative that crisscross public, institutional and private sectors. The emerging network of possibilities suggested by this Technical Memorandum should be considered only the beginning – not the end – of:

- 1) Identifying additional partners and their purpose, goals and objectives so as to eventually comprise a comprehensive inventory.
- 2) Compiling sufficient information about partners, including usable contact information, so the material can be a useful part of the OTJI Marketing Plan.

 **STRATEGY 5**

- 3) Maintaining the data base with updated contact information, additions and deletions of companies, businesses, or other partners as they may enter or depart existence.
- 4) Working and re-working the database to seek opportunities for Old Town whether they are tenants for vacant space, developers/occupiers of vacant land or other redevelopment targets, programmatic partners that strengthen Old Town's communication links to the regional, national and international markets.
- 5) Incorporate action steps based on Places, Partnerships and Policies that serve to achieve the desired tangible results of economic development and job creation for Old Town.

The summary of partnership opportunities and preliminary recommendations included in this Section reflect the incorporation of certain Economic Gardening principles into the Old Town Jobs Initiative, as well as reflections into the Knowledge Economy and Creative Class, and they role they can play in the overall redevelopment effort. Perhaps more importantly, the varied opportunities summarized herein connect with Places and Policies to form a foundation of long-term economic sustainability and growth.

## **Section 6: Policies Key to the Old Town Jobs Initiative**

### **Introduction and Methodology**

The third link connecting the Old Town Jobs Initiative is related to Policies. This is a potentially very broad area that could include a wide range of federal, state, county, city and departmental guidelines, standards, rules, regulations, ordinances or other policy formats.

The key Policies of the Old Town Jobs Initiative have been broken out into three categories.

- Economic Development Policy
- Sustainability Policy
- Competitiveness Policy

A brief Policy statement/recommendation is followed by suggested roles of Partners in implementation.

In this section we have also continued the 3P's approach to the discussion, suggesting policies that should be considered in conjunction with Places, and those associated with Partnerships. This approach allows for the greatest focus on the study area – Old Town – while also recognizing that interrelated policies all have their ultimate effect on the redevelopment and job creation goals.

The policy discussion summarized in this section is based on input received in numerous stakeholder interviews in Rock Hill and elsewhere in the region, research and analysis of City ordinances and other official material, experience with best practices in economic development throughout the nation, and reflective of the professional opinion of the consultant.

### **Economic Development Policy**

The Economic Development Policy of the City of Rock Hill is well founded and features the Department of Economic and Urban Development, and the Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation as evidence of its long-term commitment to attracting capital investment, beneficial real estate and business development, jobs, and other economic and fiscal benefits for the community.

While the mission for both entities is City-wide, in order for the Old Town Jobs Initiative and associated redevelopment effort to be successful, the City and the RHEDC should agree on a joint policy of allocating focused resources to Old Town/Downtown/Textile Corridor/Bleachery site for a period of time. It should be recognized that the City *has already* allocated significant capital resources to the redevelopment effort over time – particularly with the acquisition of the former Bleachery site, demolition and site preparation work.

As a development corporation functioning within the classic definition and purpose of a non-profit quasi-public redevelopment entity, the RHEDC should be allocated the Old Town real estate (resource) currently owned by the City, so that it may act as a “surrogate developer” and effectively redevelop the property – particularly the Lowenstein Building and former Bleachery site – through marketing, direct business arrangements with the commercial real estate industry, real estate development industry, and the various Public, Institutional and Private sector Partners as summarized in Sections 4 of this report.

Other resources may include, but not be limited to, the necessary staffing and associated funding to allow implementation and continued execution of the OTJI Marketing Plan, that includes maintaining a more comprehensive opportunity listing (Top 25 Real Estate Opportunities – See Places) and an effective cooperative marketing effort that includes the local commercial real estate industry, work with York County, the Charlotte Regional Partnership, etc. (see Partnerships).

The joint Economic Development Policy should also include agreement on a more aggressive participation by the RHEDC in local (York County), regional (Charlotte Regional Partnership), state (South Carolina Department of Commerce) and national (U.S. Economic Development Administration), as well as in other partnership opportunities, geared toward attracting target industries, and toward utilizing the extensive network of technology and other opportunities that can contribute to attaining the OTJI goals.

Additional Policy observations and recommendations are included in the Marketing Plan, Allocation of Resources and Implementation Steps sections of this report.

### **Sustainability Policy**

For purposes of the OTJI, Sustainability Policy is defined as policy that contributes to economic and environmental sustainability. These categories have various sub-categories that are referenced below. Policies relating to economic sustainability are also referenced in Economic Development Policy and Competiveness Policy sub-sections.

Long term economic sustainability in Old Town can be fostered first and foremost by implementing the Old Town Jobs Initiative, and committing the necessary resources to maintaining programs that will require permanent upkeep. Therefore, economic sustainability can be achieved through the successful development of an Innovation Center, cultivation of additional small business development/incubation facilities such as the Hive, and nurturing an entrepreneurial “start-up culture”, a close working relationship with the commercial real estate industry, penetration of future-oriented target sectors such as Advanced Manufacturing.

Long-term environmental sustainability in Old Town can be fostered through policies that encourage or reward companies for using renewable resources in construction and their products (e.g. recycled plastic and paper products, bamboo or other renewable

vegetative products, water reclamation systems, etc.). Use of renewable energy can be encouraged by policies that encourage companies (particularly those engaged in new building) to use solar, wind and other technologies. Such policies are not only good for the environment and the economy, but could contribute to Old Town's potential new brand as a technology center.

Increasingly, LEED Certification (Leadership in Energy Efficient Development) is being encouraged, or even required, by planning and regulatory agencies that oversee or approve development projects (e.g. Seattle, where all new government buildings must be LEED certified).

Consideration of policies relating to sustainability should include a review of recycling and related municipal ordinances. Making Old Town a center for technology, as well as best practices in "green" development and environmental matters could further help define its new image.

### **Competitiveness Policy**

The discussion of Competitiveness Policy could include programs, regulations, ordinances and other mechanisms at the state and federal level that are beyond the scope of this report. However, the competitiveness of Rock Hill and Old Town in relation to surrounding York County, other regional municipalities and the Charlotte Metropolitan area is a good place to start. Please see Appendix D – Rock Hill Competitiveness Discussion - for an overview of tax rates, housing costs, commercial lease rates and other factors.

A thorough review of the City of Rock Hill's policies pertaining to development, business operation (i.e. Business License fees), taxation, planning and zoning ordinances, districts, and how regulations are applied in the context of the redevelopment goals and objectives of the Old Town Jobs Initiative should be undertaken.

### **Linkage of Places to the Policy Discussion**

Virtually all Places summarized in Section 4 of this report, and important to Old Town are (or will be) affected by public policy. Policies suggested herein pertaining to Economic Sustainability and Environmental Sustainability are particularly germane to the redevelopment sites, but also to future economic development drivers such as the planned Rock Hill Streetcar line.

### **Partnership Linkages to the Policy Discussion**

- **Public Sector**

A detailed analysis of policies and programs associated with the public sector Partners including the United States Federal Government, the State of South Carolina, the City of Rock Hill, the Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation, the South Carolina

Department of Commerce, the Charlotte Regional Partnership, York County and others should be undertaken as an OTJI implementations step.

- **Institutional Partners**

A detailed analysis of policies and programs associated with institutional partners such as Winthrop University, York Technical College, the South Carolina Small Business Development Center (SCBD), the South Carolina Research Association (SCRA), the NEXT Initiative, and others should be undertaken as an OTJI implementation step

- **Private Sector Partners**

A general analysis of policies and programs associated with private sector partners should also be undertaken. Public policy statements for companies like Comporium, Springs Creative, Williams and Fudge, real estate development companies, commercial real estate brokers and agents are usually available as part of their marketing and advertising programs. Several such policy statements have been included in the Partner section of this report.

## **Section 7: Technology Framework Plan**

### **Introduction and Methodology**

The Technology Framework Plan consists of the interface between the connected three link strategy of the Old Town Jobs Initiative (Places, Partnerships and Policies), and integrated recommendations for technology/telecommunications infrastructure.

In this Section there are three case studies presented that suggest “best practices” in the use of technology-based entrepreneurial development:

- Logan, Utah
- Rochester, New York
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Other information, materials, ideas and concepts are also included in order to suggest the numerous ways in which technology, and technology-oriented organizations and partnerships, can be utilized to further economic development goals and objectives.

### **Best Practices Overview**

There is ample evidence to suggest that economic development in the United States in the last 50 years has been primarily driven by technology innovations and their influence on commerce, business, capital investment and job creation. This trend is continuing as the country moves further and further toward a knowledge-based economy. An excellent source of information on this subject is the State Science & Technology Institute (SSTI). South Carolina is a member of SSTI and Rock Hill is in a position to gain access to valuable documents and information through the State. In fact, the South Carolina Research Association (SCRA) is the resident member of the SSTI. The SCRA is referenced in various sections of the Old Town Jobs Initiative, including its potential role in the development of an Innovation Center.

As part of the implementation of the overall OLTJI and the Technology Framework Plan specifically, assigned RHEDC staff, Partners interested in pursuing the Innovation Center concept, developers, entrepreneurs and others should consult an important document published by SSTI: “*A Resource Guide for Technology-based Economic Development.*” The document can be obtained via the following website: [http://www.ssti.org/Publications/Onlinepubs/resource\\_guide.pdf](http://www.ssti.org/Publications/Onlinepubs/resource_guide.pdf) . It is an excellent starting point in determining an array of capabilities, options, and opportunities for further technology-based business development in Old Town. This is just one of many organizations (Partnerships) that can be brought to bear on the subject.

The key to successful technology-based economic development is the ability to bring critical stakeholders together to utilize resources, and choose those that are the best fit for achieving stated goals and objectives. The Old Town Jobs Initiative does this through the three link strategy of Places, Partnerships and Policies. Each community has different assets (universities, colleges, financial and infrastructure resources, existing industries and workforce base) and the OTJI is tailored to those which are present in Rock Hill *and/or can be attracted to Rock Hill and the Old Town area.*

Following are summaries of Best Practices in technology-based economic development from around the country. Some are taken from the SSTI document referenced above, while others are derived from the consulting team's professional experience.

### **Logan, Utah**

Technology-based economic development in Logan, Utah is applicable in that the City population is about 60,000, while the Cache Valley Metropolitan population is about 130,000 – similar to the relative populations of Rock Hill and York County, although a bit smaller. One difference is that Logan is home to Utah State University which is a significant research facility. However, the same process/practices have been applied in other Utah communities in Utah (St. George, Weber County, Davis County, etc.) that do not have a research facility. The process as highlighted below has been facilitated by a non-profit organization: “Grow Utah Ventures”. South Carolina has several similar organizations as summarized in the Partnerships section of the OTJI. For its part, Rock Hill is home to York Technical College and Winthrop University which have their own strengths and assets that can play a role in technology-based economic development.

Business, government and academic leaders participated in a 6-month assessment of the entrepreneurial environment in the region entitled SEED Cache Valley (Stimulate Entrepreneurism for Economic Development). Through a series of meetings facilitated by a professional the participants were able to identify key elements that were needed to stimulate growth of entrepreneurial activity, This activity was funded by a consortium of several cities, university and technical colleges, counties, private companies and the Cache Chamber of Commerce. In addition, a statewide organization EDCUtah (Economic Development Corporation of Utah) also participated.

Through a series of meetings and workshops the SEED Initiative helped to define the key entrepreneurial strengths and weakness of the metropolitan area. A series of proposals to accelerate the economic growth in key sectors were developed. This led to the establishment of an independent organization; The Cache Entrepreneurial Council (CEC) to bring together entrepreneurs, investors, academics and service providers (Banks, lawyers, marketing companies, accounts, etc.) to meet on a regular basis. The CEC organized bi-monthly luncheons to encourage networking, mentoring and education of budding entrepreneurs. Successful entrepreneurs made informal presentations discussing success and failures, best practices, sources of funding and other elements of their experience. This stimulated discussion and networking that has helped all involved. The

CEC is working with the statewide organization, Utah Technology Council (UTC) and are looking at ways to cooperate in bringing the resources of UTC to Cache Valley.

Also through the SEED Initiative the concept of re-branding Cache Valley was conceived and then brought to the Cache Chamber of Commerce. After some review, funds were raised and a marketing firm was hired to do the study and provide a roadmap to a new identity (initiated on January 3, 2012). The mission is to take a hard look at what has traditionally been thought of as a region dependant on farming and dairy products, and to redefine ourselves as a high-tech community. However, the region needs to find a focus/niche in the high-tech arena as it will not be able to compete, in general, in all areas of high-tech. This re-branding seeks to accomplish that objective. This is essential to attract the types of businesses to the region to help build the critical mass necessary for dynamic growth in a high technology economy.

Utah State University has also responded to the SEED Initiative and has redefined its role in economic development and placed greater emphasis on “partnering” with local and statewide organizations and businesses to solve problems and generate new products. Rather than just try to push out technologies with no existing markets, this approach allows the university to understand the market needs and dynamics in order to focus on solving the relevant problems, and to spin off viable entrepreneurial businesses.

The integration of local institutions of higher learning into any Technology-Based Economic Development (TBED) is an essential part of the process to ensure a flow of new ideas into the community. Just as important is recognizing the requirements regarding workforce as the knowledge economy grows. Recruiting key management talent will always be a national search requirement. However, the vast majority of employees must come from the local talent pool, and local institutions must provide critical training for this to occur (e.g. York Technical College). Constant communication of all higher education institutions with the business community, in respect to needs of a trained workforce, and the relevance of curriculum, is essential to training qualified individuals and fueling TBED.

Although the local higher education institutions in the Rock Hill area are not geared toward heavy research in the technology, biological or physical sciences, entrepreneurship in the age of the Internet is not as limited in high-tech as it once was. Competent teaching of computer sciences gives entrepreneurs the tools to build software companies that provide ingenious solutions to create products that can be marketed world-wide with very little physical infrastructure. What is needed however is the environment (mentoring, investors and talent pool) to move those ideas to companies, and the ventures to profitability. Whether the software consists of games, business productivity tools, mobile solutions or communications, the ability to introduce this to the world from any location has become a reality.

### **Rochester, New York**

One example of tech-based entrepreneurial development and the necessity of accessing several organizations and/or partners comes from Team Rochester. In an environment of many diverse, unconnected organizations that served or impacted entrepreneurs, the Greater Rochester Enterprise (GRE) organization saw the need to provide more consistent, coordinated, effective and accessible assistance to entrepreneurs in its area. GRE established Team Rochester as an umbrella group incorporating all the key players in the region. Team Rochester includes “angels” and venture capital groups involved in seed funding; the universities, city, county, and state government; the community college and local training organization; the regional planning group; and others.

GRE plays the role of “facilitating the connectedness” necessary to help an entrepreneur’s particular type of company. GRE works with the organizations to help them develop a plan and an effective approach. It occasionally provides some matching funds to catalyze the launch of new efforts.

### **Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

One approach to mentoring technology-based economic development comes from the Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Central and Northern Pennsylvania’s Transformation Business Services Network. The Network provides operational assistance to past, current and potential future portfolio companies. The support is focused in functional areas to augment the capability of the companies’ management teams. The Network staff is co-located with Ben Franklin in its three offices in Erie, Harrisburg and State College. The service is provided through a contract with a non-profit organization that fields the staff of experts. This Network consists of nine individuals with a reported 234 years of combined industrial experience in marketing, strategic planning, general management, finance, human resource planning and accounting.

If requested, the Network is able to provide other specialized support through outside (e.g. legal) consultants. The Network also conducts four business plan contests for the Center and takes responsibility for Entrepreneur Day events in State College and Erie. These events include lectures on topics such as intellectual property protection, company investment presentations and finance. According to the Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Central and Northern Pennsylvania website, in 2004 the Network supported 180 companies with over 10,400 person-hours of direct effort.

## **Technology Framework Discussion**

The Technology Framework Plan continues with applications to Places, Partnerships and Policies. This is followed by a summary discussion of technology infrastructure in Old Town.

### **Technology Places**

Technology can, and should, be manifested in all Places referenced in the Old Town Jobs Initiative, including the recommended list of Top 25 Real Estate Opportunities that will be maintained by RHEDC staff. Key Technology Places would include:

- The Lowenstein Building which could host an Innovation Center and be outfitted with state-of-the art technology
- The former Bleachery site at large, which could host technology-based companies and be a showcase for the emerging “Technology Corridor” concept
- The Downtown East project which will feature Comporium’s telecommunications technology and other infrastructure in its mixed-use development
- The City of Rock Hill which has Wi-Fi technology that is used for coordinating its Emergency Services, and could also be used to enhance connectivity in public parks and elsewhere

Places located outside Old Town and the immediate areas of greater Rock Hill and York County can also be important components of the Technology Framework Plan. These could include technology companies in the Charlotte Metro area looking to relocate or grow their businesses in South Carolina; technology start-ups and companies located elsewhere around the country (or world); organizations such as the South Carolina Research Authority with its Innovations Centers, and technology hubs such as Silicon Valley, the Research Triangle.

### **Technology Partnerships**

Technology partnerships can include interrelationships with virtually all Partners summarized in that particular section of the Old Town Jobs Initiative, particularly with York Technical College, Comporium, Winthrop University and the Hive; but they can extend out globally under the Technology Framework Plan. Similarly, as part of the Old Town Jobs Initiative, technology can be woven into the fabric of the strategy which includes important Places (e.g. the Lowenstein Building, former Bleachery site and Downtown East) and key Policies such as those related to sustainability and renewable energy.

In addition to technology partnerships that create and build business and entrepreneurial venture, there are technology partnership opportunities that speak directly to the need for start-up capital as part of the economic/business development process. A small sampling of such partners includes the following:

- **XConomy** – An online publication and forum that provides a networking opportunity for start-ups, technology companies, public and private enterprises, and individuals interested in current events within the technology fields, including web marketing, information and data, life and biosciences.
- **AngelPad** – A mentorship program founded by a team of ex-Googlers to help technology start-ups build better products, attract seed funding and grown more successful businesses.
- **blackbox ventures** (lower case is correct) – A next generation seed accelerator for technology start-ups based in the heart of Silicon Valley, blackbox connects entrepreneurs with a global network of seed investors, mentors and market entrance partners, and works with entrepreneurs to run their startups more effectively.
- **LendFriend** – This is an online platform for people to provide loans to their friends and family. The company provides assistance with the creation, approval and repayment of the loan. Their stated goal is to overcome the traditional drawbacks associated with lending and borrowing money with friend and family.
- **TechStars** – Provides seed money for start-ups from over 75 venture capital sources throughout the world. TechStars serves as a business accelerator and offers mentoring and other professional services to its client base.
- **Y Combinator** – In 2005 the company developed a new model for start-up funding. Twice a year they invest a small amount of money (average \$18K) in a large number of start-ups (60 – 70). The start-ups move to Silicon Valley for 3 months, during which time they are mentored to get their companies in the best possible shape and refine their pitch to investors. Since 2005 they have funded over 300 start-ups.
- **GUST** ([www.gust.com](http://www.gust.com)) – “Professional Investor Relations from Pitch to Exit.” The industry standard funding application for angel groups and venture capital funds. This is a free service to help start-up companies obtain “angel capital”
- **Kauffman Foundation** – (<http://www.kauffman.org>) The Foundation maintains a website that has valuable resources available to help entrepreneurs understand the process of innovation, company financing and growth

## **Technology Policies**

Public policies affecting business development, entrepreneurial ventures, job creation and overall economic development in Old Town are generally treated within the Policies section of the OTJI. Policies specific to future investments in technology infrastructure and other commitments by the public, institutional and private sectors needs to be further evaluated as per recommendations in Section 5.

## **Technology Infrastructure Discussion**

A new (additional) power station seems to be needed to prevent loss of power for businesses and buildings downtown (Old Town). The availability of high quality and redundant power availability is essential to a thriving high tech community. Avoiding the loss of connection to computers and the Internet on any regular basis is a critical element to these types of companies. This is particularly true now that software, inventories, games and “cloud based” storage are becoming standard. Any loss will immediately and perhaps irreparably affect the customer and will lead to loss of business.

The Wi-Fi system owned/controlled by the City of Rock Hill is for EMT only. Comporium also provides Wi-Fi service through its own system. Since systems are in place, there is little cost to making available to a wider audience. The issue is who will pay for it. Perhaps “free” Wi-Fi could be limited to low bandwidth applications, or to only a limited amount of data per computer per day. That way it would be a convenience to those on the go to have universal access to email and some web browsing in Old Town, but would not be useful in running a business. This type of “throttling” of data or speed is used by the cell phone industry so it should be applicable to Wi-Fi also.

According to Comporium representatives, technology services that can be provided to the Lowenstein Building and Bleachery site include:

- Fiber can be diversely routed, serving the building which allows us the ability to provide Multi-Megabit Ethernet Transmission Services (METS) for point to point WAN data connections, local service transport, and high-speed dedicated internet access.
- Basic local telephone services (standard, PRI, and key system lines)
- Business telephone systems including both premise-based solutions and fully hosted voice over IP solutions. Hosted services would be fully managed with dedicated connections to Comporium’s hosted voice servers.
- High speed internet services (both DSL and Cable modem)
- Structured wiring and cabling for internal voice and data endpoints.

## **STRATEGY 5**

- Commercial security systems that include monitoring, access control, camera systems and digital video recording.
- Digital Cable TV services including standard channel line-up, HD channel selection, etc.
- Commercial wireless plans including sale and support of multiple PDA devices.

### **Summary Conclusions**

The Technology Framework Plan is part and parcel embedded into the Old Town Jobs Initiative. It is woven into the Places, Partnerships and Policies three link strategy, and will be developed over time as the OTJI is implemented. The Technology Framework Plan has to be viewed in the context of global markets and the technologies that exists to support them, as well as those which are emerging or yet to be invented.

Additional observations, findings and recommendations pertaining to the Technology Framework Plan are included in the Old Town Marketing Plan and Implementation Steps sections of this report.

## **Section 8: Innovation Center Concept Discussion**

### **Introduction and Methodology**

The Old Town Jobs Initiative demands catalysts that will attract private capital investment, spur small business and entrepreneurial development, leverage public / private partnerships, and – as the name implies – create jobs in Rock Hill. The OTJI is based on the three connected links of “Places”, “Partnerships” and “Policies”. A catalyst project that is potentially the nexus of all three foundation elements is an “Innovation Center”.

This Section conveys observations, findings and recommendations that are germane to the discussion of an Innovation Center in Rock Hill/Old Town; examples of other Innovation Centers and their framework for development and operation; and, suggestions with regard to the Places, Partnerships and Policies that could make such a catalyst project a reality in Rock Hill.

### **Case Studies**

There are numerous examples of successful Innovation Centers from which the OTJI can draw information, modeling, and possibly – inspiration. In this Section we have focused on one facility, the NEXT Center, located in Greenville, South Carolina. Additional centers that may be the subject of further case study analysis are bulleted at the end.

### **The NEXT Innovation Center**

The NEXT Center is a product of the NEXT Economic Development Initiative, which in turn was spurred by the Greenville, South Carolina Chamber of Commerce beginning in 2006. The effort was driven by approximately 20 CEOs and expanded to a group of more than 60 CEOs. The partnership grew to include the City of Greenville Economic Development Office, the Hughes Development Corporation (in a for-profit business model), and an “angel network” of accredited investors (Upstate Carolina Angel Network).

The NEXT Initiative and the Center that embodies it include four design principles:

- Designed to serve high-impact technology companies
- Designed to develop an “innovation ecosystem”
- Designed to serve a concierge system for companies
- Designed to provide public advocacy for economic development



*The NEX T Center’s vision is embodied by the words: “Innovate, Commercialize, Grow”.*

A 60,000 square foot building purchased in 2008 by Hughes Development Corporation, and opened in 2009 as a for-profit, market driven facility with market rate leases ranging from \$16 - \$20 per square foot gross (inclusive of parking, utilities, Wi-Fi, common space, etc.). Redevelopment costs are unofficially estimated to have been between \$10 million and \$15 million, including up-fit and FF&E (fixtures, furnishing and equipment). A significant funding component was the use of New Market Tax Credits according to NEX T Initiative officials.

This facility, located in downtown Greenville, South Carolina is one example of an Innovation Center that may hold particular value for Rock Hill and the OTJI. A product of collaboration between the Greenville Chamber of Commerce, Hughes Development Corporation, the City of Greenville, and Upstate South Carolina economic development officials, the NEX T Center opened in July 2009. The partnership is housed in a redeveloped 60,000 square foot building near downtown (similarly oriented as the Bleachery site) and embodies the realized potential of hard work between private and public entities.

Space is leased by individual companies, executive suites or “third man” operations, and other businesses including entrepreneurial start-ups. They benefit from shared common areas, conference rooms, office infrastructure, technology and other amenities.



*The NEXT Center features several common areas that are conducive to the “mind-share” principle that is designed to strengthen peer relationships.*

The NEXT Innovation Center has several “partner tenants” including:

**The Hughes Development Corporation** - The NEXT Center was developed by the Hughes Development Corporation. Essentially, the firm is a real estate development and brokerage firm with headquarters in Greenville, South Carolina, founded by G. Jackson Hughes in 1996. Hughes Commercial Properties has an extensive portfolio of properties throughout the Carolinas and Georgia. The company locates, develops, leases and manages properties that include large retailers such as Hobby Lobby, Trader Joe’s, Radio Shack, Wal-Greens, CVS, Starbucks and others.

**NWN Corporation** – This IT company provides services to the private and public sector including major banks, universities, manufacturers, hospitals, and state and local government agencies. NWN sells professional services, provides professional staff or long-term contractors, data storage and business continuity services. Client/partners include Cisco, Microsoft, HP, Novell and Altiris.

**Michelin Development** – Michelin is the world’s largest tire manufacturer, employing 130,000 people and with sales in over 170 countries. Michelin Development contributes to the economic redevelopment and long term prosperity of the regions in which its sites are located. Working in conjunction with regional development agencies, local government and business support agencies, Michelin Development aims to: stimulate employment through attracting investment; assist in shaping development of projects in conjunction with local business support agencies; and, encourage skills and entrepreneurship able to support the long-term future of the local region.

**Other partner tenants include: Gnoso** – An Internet Web-Design and technology company; Merge – an IT services firm; Vigilix - ; ProActive – OnPoint – Lab 21 – and; ScioDiamond



*A former 60,000 square foot warehouse was redeveloped into the NEXT Center that includes high ceilings, a clean modern interior, excellent light bays and other excellent design features.*

**Summary Finding:** The NEXT Center demonstrates how a partnership between a private developer, public sector economic development entities, and attracted companies/tenants can partner to create a market-driven facility that fosters entrepreneurial growth and job creation.

**Summary Recommendation:** In addition to further study by the Strategy 5 team, the RHEDC may wish to visit the NEXT Center and further discuss its formation, operation, and role in economic development. The person to contact is:

Brenda Laakso  
Vice President – Entrepreneurship  
NEXT  
24 Cleveland St.  
Greenville Chamber of Commerce  
Greenville, SC 29601  
(864) 239-3711 (Direct)

**Other Facilities for review and study include the following:**

- The Duke Energy Innovation Center – Anderson, SC
- SCRA USC Innovation Center – Columbia, SC
- SCRA MUSC Innovation Center – Charleston, SC
- Silver Spring Innovation Center – Silver Spring, MD
- Technology Innovation Center – East Lansing, MI

- Technology Innovation Center – Milwaukee, WI
- The Stampede – Durham, NC
- The Ben Craig Center
- Packard Place
- Verizon Innovation Centers (ADD)

### **Overview of Technology Elements**

As part of the Technology Framework Plan the team has identified physical, programmatic and partnership elements for inclusion in the OTJI. As this work has progressed, the advantages of an interface with a potential Innovation Center in Old Town has become obvious. Therefore, a series of bullet points are included in this Section that will be the basis for further research and recommendations in the implementation phase of the OTJI. These bulleted points also suggest spatial, funding and finance, and practical relationships that require further study.

### **Technology Requirements**

New information-age jobs need IT infrastructure at an affordable price

- Internet access of at least 1Gps
- IP phone systems
- Access to excellent cellular voice and data

### **Innovation Space and Services**

Start-up businesses need access to:

- Low cost space while in the start-up stage with appropriate IT infrastructure
- Capital either through debt or equity financing
- Start-up savvy legal, business planning and accounting services
- Conference rooms and video conferencing to keep travel costs low
- State programs with respect to development grants; foreign trade facilitation

### **Equity Capital Environment Bridging “Valley of Death”**

- High net worth individuals willing to serve as angel investors
- Organization to bring angel investors together to cooperate on deals
- Local venture capital preferable but not necessary
- Banks willing to do venture loans

### **Higher-Education Cooperating in Entrepreneurship and Technology Transfer**

- Higher-education institutions that value and promote
- Business schools or programs directed to entrepreneurs
- Science and engineering departments
- Tech Transfer office actively engaged in fostering commercialization

### **Summary Conclusions**

The concept of an Innovation Center in Old Town Rock Hill is one that warrants further study, and potentially draws together the framework elements of “Places, Partnerships and Policies”. It could also be a major catalyst for future development on the former Bleachery site. The “Rock Hill Innovation Center” should be pursued (if the concept meets with approval) as a for-profit venture, as was the NEXT Center, with the public sector acting as facilitator in attracting a private development partner. The existence of possible institutional partners such as York Technical College and Winthrop University; possible corporate partners such as Comporium; and access to growing companies and innovative start-ups in the greater Rock Hill / York County / Charlotte Metropolitan Area add to the pragmatic feasibility of the project, as well as its attractiveness as an economic development catalyst for the Old Town Jobs Initiative.

## **Section 9: Old Town Marketing Plan**

### **Introduction and Methodology**

This Section conveys observations, findings and recommendation pertaining to Work Area 7 of the Strategy 5 Scope of Services: Prepare a Marketing Plan for Old Town. Task 7.1 calls for an explanation of Plan logic, linking various other work areas to the future marketing and redevelopment of Old Town. Task 7.2: The Marketing Plan was to include a series of steps and recommendations to be undertaken in Phase II and Phase III of the Old Town Jobs Initiative, as suggested by the RHEDC in the original Request for Proposal. At this time, no decision has been made by the RHEDC concerning next phases of professional consulting, but the Marketing Plan is presented herein under the assumption that such work will be undertaken.

### **Branding Discussion**

During the course of the work program for the Old Town Jobs Initiative, the consultant team encountered confusion from stakeholders and the community at large concerning place names in Rock Hill (e.g. Old Town, Downtown, College Town, the Textile Corridor, the Bleachery site and so forth) as they overlap. There was also an evident question of relevance for today's society. In a future-looking world, increasingly defined by rapidly changing technology, social media and mainstream media that deal in sound-bites; and the reality that the economic foundation for the OTJI must be based on the future – not the past – phrases that continue to define key parts of Rock Hill in the context of places and industries that flourished decades ago needs to be revisited.

Serious consideration needs to be given to the following bold steps:

- A) Consolidating the places names used when engaged in the continuing redevelopment discussion and associated work, including marketing.
- B) Dropping place names that no longer have relevance to the future
- C) Creating a new name that can be the basis for branding that more effectively conveys Rock Hill's commitment to technology and participation in building a new economic foundation and job creation mechanism.

Strategy 5 LLC *does not suggest* that an *additional* place name be added to the mix, thus further confusing the situation. Conversely, consolidation could result in two place names used in the area that is the subject of this analysis:

- Old Town, which is inclusive of a fairly large geographic area (about a one mile radius from City Hall); and,

- The Innovation Corridor (or Technology District, or some other salient identifier)

Additional specific recommendations pertaining to brand and naming issues are as follows:

- Downtown and the Textile Corridor can be absorbed into Old Town for branding, marketing, management and use in a host of redevelopment efforts as suggested in this report. Conversely, Old Town could be absorbed into Downtown.
- The Bleachery site should be referred to as the *former* Bleachery site, or done away with all together as the Bleachery itself no longer exists and confuses people. Any historic designation can be told via plaques, industrial memorabilia displayed as public art in pocket parks and along the future streetcar routed.
- The Lowenstein Building should be referred to as the *former* Lowenstein Building, or the name done away with all together – at least in marketing materials that are created in moving forward. Any historic designation can be told via plaques, story boards, old photos and memorabilia displayed inside the redeveloped building.
- The former Power Plant and Water Works can reflect the historic heart of the corridor and the cutting edge of technology and manufacturing it hosted during the Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Company’s rise to prominence.
- New and future projects such as Downtown East can both help create, and capture, the wave of connections to the refreshed brand and the various marketing plan elements as summarized below.

While the colloquial names and expressions for the places referenced in this section may continue to be used in the local parlance for years to come, it is important that Old Town Rock Hill get a fresh face for the critical redevelopment effort that lies ahead. While any name change or designation as suggested herein may be controversial, we stand by the importance of putting the issue (and the opportunity) on the table in the context of the Old Town Jobs Initiative.

The reader should consider these basic recommendations that pertain to branding, as the key elements of the Old Town Marketing Plan set forth below are also considered.

### **The Marketing Plan**

Recommended components of the Marketing Plan are presented below in a summary format. Under Phase II and Phase III work, it is anticipated that each of these components would be expanded into separate strategic and tactical analyses that link the Places, Partnerships and Policies of the Old Town Jobs Initiative, and their associated

recommendations. The bullet points below follow the same content and order as included in the Strategy 5 Scope of Services and work plan.

- **Multi-media / Press Campaign**

A concerted media-relations campaign needs to be prepared, adopted and executed in the 12 calendar months following completion of the Old Town Jobs Initiative (February 2012 – February 2013) in order to capitalize on momentum developed during the study process; and, to promote and cultivate the numerous interrelated opportunities of the Places, Partnerships and Policies three-pronged strategy. Elements of the campaign should include:

- Incorporation of news-worthy items in the RHEDC/City outlets such as the Old Town newsletter, Rock HillUSA website, new Bleachery website, etc.
- Monthly press release to a media contact list including the Herald Tribune, Charlotte Observer, South Carolina and North Carolina business journals, economic development agencies (see Partnerships), television and radio outlets. Use of the Internet through Blogs, Facebook, and other social media should be exploited.

All elements of the Marketing Plan as summarized below should be incorporated into the multi-media / press campaign.

- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO) of RHEDC / City websites**

A review of SEO applications for the RHEDC / City websites should be undertaken in detail (possibly by the Hive) in order to ensure that every advantage can be leveraged to Old Town's benefit. Crafting organic SEO tactics such as incorporating words like technology, future, and place names (e.g. Technology Corridor) can be a useful and economical SEO approach. As the Partnership network continues to grow, these linkages can be useful in the SEO element of the marketing plan as well.

- **Creation of new website link with SEO**

Rock Hill has several interfacing websites that promote the City as a place to live, conduct business, go to school, and otherwise become part of the community. [www.RockHillUSA.com](http://www.RockHillUSA.com) is the primary City site, and includes property listings and other information. The recommendation to include additional Places and the Top 25 Real Estate Opportunities into the OTJI and associated Marketing Plan could be hosted here. Recently (winter 2012) a new website has been created: [www.rockhillbleachery.com](http://www.rockhillbleachery.com); that is a joint venture public/private partnership between the Hive, RevenFlo web marketing firm, York Technical College, Winthrop University and the City of Rock Hill / RHEDC. This website has more sophisticated technology in evidence than the City site, particularly the GIS capabilities that can more effectively illustrate development

opportunity locations. For the OTJI Marketing Plan, Strategy 5 recommends that the new Bleachery website be expanded to include all of Old Town (and renamed accordingly; or as Downtown if that identifier is chosen), and that the various Places (development opportunity sites) including the Top 25 Real Estate Opportunities be featured here. A cross link with the City website would then also be recommended.

- **Next step follow-up with interested party database**

The Marketing Plan necessarily includes hands on follow-up with the numerous Partnerships referenced throughout the Old Town Jobs Initiative (and specifically in that dedicated section of the report) including those in the Public, Institutional and Private sectors. This follow-up has to be undertaken as an outflow implementation step, using the telephone, email, personal meetings, social media and other methods to cultivate the network on behalf of Old Town.

- **Individualized marketing plans for specific sites buildings**

The Marketing Plan is interconnected with recommendations throughout the OTJI – particularly those contained in the Places section. Places need to be prominently marketed through the various websites, real-time information maintained (i.e. Top 25 Real Estate Opportunities), cross marketing efforts with the commercial real estate industry, inclusion in the media relations and public relations campaigns. It is further recommended that individual marketing strategies be crafted for the most important sites and buildings such as the Lowenstein Building and the former Bleachery site. The OTJI document itself provides extensive marketing information and materials that can be useful in this regard. Requests for Proposals, direct marketing to Partners and developers for a proposed Innovation Center, and other targeted redevelopment projects should also be employed on an individualized basis.

- **Commercial realtor liaison campaign**

A foundation element of the Marketing Plan for Old Town needs to be an enhanced, for-profit based relationship between Public partners (e.g. RHEDC, City of Rock Hill and York County) and the commercial real estate brokers and agents that are active in the local / regional market. This enhanced relationship can be accomplished through fee-based compensation agreements with realtors, cross marketing of properties on websites, monthly luncheons or other quasi-social networking opportunities, and regular, direct one-on-one communication between redevelopment staff and realtors to discuss opportunities, address issues or problems, and otherwise maintain the back and forth flow of information.

- **Advertising campaign for separate industries**

Referring to the Target Market Analysis, Rock Hill has the opportunity to pursue various industry sectors that can play important roles in business development, entrepreneurial venture creation, real estate development, job creation and a host of economic and fiscal

benefits. These sectors include Advanced Manufacturing, Advanced Textiles, Health Sciences and Technology (including IT, Web marketing, Internet retail, telecommunications, etc.). The Marketing Plan suggests that individual advertising campaigns designed to attract companies to Old Town be crafted and executed in some prioritized fashion – possibly in conjunction with development of an Innovation Center. Advertising campaigns could utilize the media relations program as referenced above, press release and other presence in various industry journals, participation in industry conferences and conventions, and conventional use of brochures and web-based advertising techniques.

- **“Guerilla Marketing” recommendations for capturing market share**

The concept of guerilla marketing was invented as an unconventional system of promotions that relies more on energy and imagination rather than a large marketing budget. Typically, guerilla marketing campaigns are unexpected and unconventional, often interactive, and consumers are targeted in unexpected places. The objective of guerilla marketing is to create a unique, engaging and thought-provoking concept to generate buzz, and consequently turn viral. Guerilla marketing involves unusual approaches such as intercept encounters in public places. PR stunts, or any unconventional or atypical tactic designed to get maximum results from minimal resources. The most innovative approaches to Guerilla marketing now utilize mobile digital technologies and social media to engage the public and create a memorable brand experience. Guerilla marketing techniques could be employed on Old Town’s behalf through internship/partnership opportunities with York Tech and Winthrop students and tech-savvy participants at the Hive, among other “energy sources.”

- **Images, logos, key words, to convey elements of “the pitch”**

Depending on policy decisions with regard to renaming, consolidation, branding and other key elements of the overall Marketing Plan as summarized in Section 1 above, a new pallet of images, colors, key words and other branding components will need to be created. We suggest that these elements respect and otherwise capitalize on Old Town Rock Hill’s historic past, but place an emphasis on the future, perhaps within the confines of the Innovation Corridor (or whatever name is chosen to reflect the technology-driven business development that needs to occur). Further development of images, logos, etc. is beyond the scope of the Old Town Jobs Initiative, but would be appropriately addressed by Strategy 5 LLC in Phase II or Phase III of the Old Town Redevelopment Plan.

- **Public relations recommendations**

An effective public relations campaign crisscrosses virtually every aspect of the Old Town Jobs Initiative. In fact, a solid public relations foundation has been laid by the Strategy 5 team by conducting numerous stakeholder interviews as part of the work program. These interviews, conducted one-on-one or in small groups with potential public, institutional and private sector partners, served to inform the OTJI with perspectives, experience, ideas, and other valuable input; and, also to inform stakeholders

of the proactive efforts of the RHEDC, City of Rock Hill and others toward achieving important economic development goals. The interviews also served as a chance for Strategy 5 to promote specific real estate development opportunities (e.g. former Bleachery site), projects (e.g. the Innovation Center concept), partnerships and other implementation-oriented goals. The public relations effort must continue in perpetuity as part of our view of Economic Gardening, and as an offshoot of the networking suggested by the Partnerships section of the report.

- **“Old Town Ambassador” Campaign**

In order to effectively implement many of the recommendations contained in the Old Town Jobs Initiative, such as a close working relationship with the commercial real estate industry, interaction with the numerous partnership entities and working with them to yield tangible results for Old Town, pursuit of both “outside-in” and “inside-out” business recruitment – possibly involving regional, national and even international travel, there needs to be an Old Town Ambassador. This individual could be selected from within the existing City / RHEDC staff, or brought in specifically to handle this important and far reaching marketing and public relations assignment. The exact job description and other details of this recommended position within the Old Town Jobs Initiative is further treated in the Allocation of Resources and Implementation Plan sections of this report.

### **Summary Conclusion**

The Marketing Plan outline provides an extensive “to do” list associated with re-branding, redevelopment of existing building, attracting new capital investment and new construction, maintaining high occupancy levels in commercial properties throughout Old Town, and strengthening the City’s ability to cultivate new business, foster entrepreneurship and create good jobs in meaningful numbers over the short, mid and long term.

Implementing the Marketing Plan and other elements of the Old Town Jobs Initiative will require an allocation of resources in order to capture market share and spur development that will lead to a return on the investment of precious public funding and staff time. Summary recommendations pertaining to the allocation of resources is presented in Section 10.

Strategy 5 LLC and its team members are uniquely positioned to assist the RHEDC, City of Rock Hill and the community at large with further development of Marketing Plan details, and its implementation along with a host of other key elements of the overall Old Town Jobs Initiative. This is pursuant to the original RFP issued by the RHEDC that anticipated the need for Phase II and Phase III professional services on what was then termed the Old Town Redevelopment Plan (subsequently renamed Old Town Jobs Initiative).

 **STRATEGY 5**

The framework of Places, Partnerships and Policies for the Old Town Jobs Initiative includes extensive follow up activities, as does the included Technology Framework Plan and the Marketing Plan; all of which have multiple interconnections and sequential and concurrent leveraging opportunities. It is important to understand the breadth and depth of these connections, the benefits their cultivation can yield, and the commitment to implementation and allocation of resources it will require.

## **Section 10: Allocation of Resources / Financial Modeling Discussion**

Implementation of the OTJI will involve the development of a funding and finance strategy, allocation of available (and acquirable) resources, departmental and project budgets, etc. In order to provide the basis for these elements a financial model should be created that allows for variable inputs and outputs. We suggest the model be set up as a cash-flow pro forma with revenues and expenses resulting in a net income/loss. This model should be used to “solve for feasibility” allowing for its use as a tool to determine where and/or how revenues need to be increased, and where and/or how expenses need to be decreased in order to make desired projects workable. Each project (Lowenstein Building, Bleachery site, etc.) probably warrant their own spreadsheet and separate feasibility analysis. Ultimately these individual analyses could be merged into a “master cash flow pro-forma” that would inform budgetary and other policy decisions.

Inputs/Revenues could include such things as:

- Revenue streams / allocations from the City budget
- Revenue streams / allocations from program such as Pennies for Progress
- Revenue streams / allocations from sale of City/RHEDC - owned real estate
- Revenue streams / allocations from leasing of City/RHEDC – owned real estate
- Revenue streams / allocations from private investment in OTJI opportunity sites
- Revenue streams / allocations from grants/programs emanating from Partnerships
- Revenue-side financial variables associated with tax credits, incentives, etc.

Inputs/Expenses could include such things as:

- Expenses for “bricks and mortar” redevelopment actions associated with sites.
- Expenses for continued infrastructure development (e.g. technology, streets, etc)
- Expenses for additional staff / professional services associated with overall implementation of the OTJI including the Old Town Marketing Plan
- Expenses for “hard costs” associated with marketing Old Town (e.g. websites, SEO, printing, signage, etc.)
- Expenses for investment in acquisition and assembly of additional sites and buildings to contribute to the long-term redevelopment strategy and fuel the RHEDC self-funding mechanism.

Outputs could include such things as:

- Net income/loss from individual projects over time
- Net income/loss from combined projects over time
- Supportable debt and equity from individual project
- Supportable debt and equity from combined projects
- Residual Land Value (which can inform sales prices)

 **STRATEGY 5**

- Return on investment for capital projects
- Return on investment for marketing and other programs over time
- Cost / Benefit analysis and projections to guide policy decisions.

Ultimately, the goals of the financial model are related to illustrating and tracking an economic / redevelopment project (OTJI) that is broad based with many moving parts (Places, Partnerships and Policies) which will continue to evolve for years to come. The objective is to forecast financial performance that can be best understood through the inputs and outputs summarized above, and being able to conduct analysis based on impacts of policy decisions, free-market responses by the private sector, and the overall effectiveness of the implementation steps summarized in the following Section 11.

## **Section 11: Implementation Steps**

According to the original Request for Proposal issued for professional services to complete the Old Town Jobs Initiative, much of the implementation planning and action process is to take place in Phase 2 and Phase 3 work programs. In this section over 20 preliminary implementation steps are summarized for consideration in the overall context of moving forward with the OTJI and its many recommendations. Once again, we have utilized the organizing framework of Places, Partnerships and Policies to provide a format for this discussion.

### **Places Key to the OTJI**

Implementation steps associated with Places over the next 12 months should include the following:

- Select additional Opportunity Sites in Old Town (i.e. parcels, buildings, areas, etc.)
- Plot these additional Opportunity Sites on the Old Town map
- Merge the Old Town Map with technologies present in the new Bleachery website, and those in the Rock Hill USA website
- Select the initial Top 25 Real Estate Opportunities, as part of the Old Town Marketing Plan
- Move forward with the real estate industry co-marketing plan
- Further assess the feasibility of an Innovation Center, particularly as part of the redevelopment plan for the Lowenstein Building
- Continue the re-branding discussion set forth in the OTJI

### **Partnerships Key to the OTJI**

Implementation steps associated with Partnerships over the next 12 months should include the following:

- A clear chain of command/contact should be established so that one person is the key to an unbroken flow of information and communication with prospective partners. This individual should be given certain authority to act independently in order to maximize the yield from partnerships.
- Each prospective partner should be contacted regarding the OTJI, and the summary network presented in this report strengthened in terms of depth, contacts, and potential assistance that prospective partners can provide to the Old Town effort.
- A calendar of events should be plotted that illustrates key meetings, conferences, decision deadlines (e.g. grants) and other important dates that can be merged into

- the networking process and the role of the “Old Town Ambassador” and other staff.
- A plan for bringing potential partners to Rock Hill needs to be established in conjunction with the Marketing Plan in order to introduce the opportunities and challenges that the RHEDC and the OTJI are attempting to address. Details like hotel accommodation, tour routes, special events and other considerations should be incorporated into this plan.
  - A goal(s) for benefit from each prospective partner should be established and incorporated into the overall implementation plan, including the funding and finance strategy, associated financial model, etc.

### **Policies Key to OTJI**

Implementation steps associated with Policies over the next 12 months should include the following:

- Presentations and workshops with City Council, City Manager’s Office, Mayor’s Office and other key policy makers should be completed within 3 months.
- City Council should adopt the OTJI as policy, thus allowing other decisions to be made and enacted.
- The policy section of this report should be thoroughly reviewed, and individual policy areas further studied as recommended.
- A “Sustainability Policy” should be written and considered for inclusion in the Rock Hill Planning and Zoning Ordinances.
- An “Economic Development Policy” and “Competitiveness Policy” should be considered.
- Consideration of the original Phase 2 and Phase 3 work programs should be continued and a decision made on moving forward as part of the Old Town Marketing Plan and other OTJI elements.

Other implementation steps should include, but not be limited to the following:

- The financial model referenced in Section 10 needs to be created, and various input/output sensitivity runs completed to determine resource requirements and availability.
- An OTJI implementation budget needs to be established and the necessary resources found and allocated according to recommendations and the results of the financial analysis referenced in the previous bullet point
- Dedicated staff and/or contract professionals need to be assigned to the OTJI and their roles and responsibilities clearly defined in the context of other RHEDC/City departments.