



**Downtown Macon Business Improvement District Business Plan**

Developed by a growing coalition of downtown property and business owners in cooperation with NewTown Macon, a Downtown Macon Business Improvement District (BID) is proposed to improve and convey special benefits to commercial properties located within the central business district. The BID will finance new supplemental services, including safety ambassadors and image enhancement programs above and beyond those currently provided by local government. This approach has been used successfully in other downtowns to improve image, attract new customers, increase sales, improve occupancy and increase property values.

**I. Downtown Macon BID Boundaries**

**A. Area Defined**

The Downtown Macon Business Improvement District (BID) boundaries will run concurrent with the boundaries of the Central Business District as established by Macon-Bibb Planning and Zoning Commission at the time of the institution of the district. The BID boundaries were selected for the following reasons:

- The BID includes the heart of downtown Macon, it is the Central Business District as well as the civic and cultural center.
- The BID respects boundaries established by past downtown planning efforts.
- Through the BID formation process, property and business owners within the boundaries have evidenced an interest in being a part of a Business Improvement District.

**B. Boundary Adjustments**

Following the creation of the BID, the BID Steering Committee may recommend adjustments to reduce the proposed BID boundary. No additional property will be added to expand the proposed BID boundary, unless affected property owner(s) file a petition requesting to be added and the area is approved by County Commission for inclusion.

**II. BID Operating Assumptions**

**A. Safety Ambassadors**

The mission of Downtown Macon Safety Ambassadors will be to improve both the perception and reality of safety and make downtown streets more hospitable by supporting law enforcement agencies, property owners and businesses in crime prevention efforts while offering excellent customer service to downtown patrons.

We will hire a team equivalent to three full-time positions at a rate equivalent to \$15/hour to serve as



safety ambassadors for downtown Macon. These safety ambassadors will be trained to respond to most downtown needs and equipped with maps to assist downtown patrons with all matter of concerns or questions. We will also establish a formal relationship with the Macon-Bibb Sheriff’s office, so that ambassadors can work directly with law enforcement as needed. The Downtown Macon Safety Ambassador program will provide the following services:

**1. Concierge Services**

Welcome and direct pedestrians to civic, shopping and business destinations;

**2. Correct Anti-Social Behavior**

Deter disruptive street behavior, report public intoxication, defuse potential conflicts;

**3. Deter Nuisance Crimes**

Identify, report and ensure prosecution of nuisance crimes such as vandalism, graffiti, drug use and panhandling;

**4. Maintain Public Services**

Monitor street lighting and other public services to ensure that streets remain bright and clean;

**5. Respond to Constituent Concerns**

Constantly look for new opportunities to maintain and increase commerce in the BID.

**B. Clean Team:**

The mission of Clean Team will be to present and maintain a world-class downtown experience for all downtown patrons.

We will hire a team equivalent to two positions at a rate equivalent to \$15/hour plus benefits to present an attractive, unique and memorable city experience to each and every downtown patron. The members of the clean team will be trained and equipped to correct and upgrade public resources such as sidewalks, street lights, landscaping, landscape features, street furniture, walls and doors and other aspects of the public realm experience for downtown patrons.

The Clean Team program will provide the following services:

**1. Litter Control**

Collect and dispose of any and all litter in downtown, monitor trash containers and enclosures and ensure they are emptied as necessary;

**2. Graffiti Removal**

Remove or paint over graffiti on public and private visible surfaces in downtown with the goal that no piece of graffiti is in place for 24 hours before being removed;

**3. Landscaping**

Supplement existing public staff to maintain, upgrade and enhance the beauty of downtown landscaping elements;



**4. Street Furniture**

Monitor the condition of street furniture, perform regular maintenance, develop a plan for purchasing, expanding and correctly siting street furniture for maximum usage;

**5. Minor Repairs**

Perform minor repairs to public amenities on the spot.

**C. Direct Program Costs:**

Direct program costs are all the expenses necessary to run the above Such expenses include licenses, legal support, tools, materials, uniforms, office supplies, professional fees (such as audit fees), insurance and other incidental administrative expenses.

Direct program costs do not contain any provision for training and administration for these staff, or rental of office space or utility expense for the same. Administration of staff and any needs for office space will need to be handled by the BID board or contracted with a local partner.

**D. Administration**

**1. Existing Non-Profit:**

Georgia BID legislation allows the BID to contract with an existing downtown nonprofit corporation to administer and implement BID programs. The BID board of directors is authorized to select and monitor the performance of the nonprofit organization. This is common practice for BIDs throughout the nation.

Subject to the BID board’s decision, NewTown Macon, an existing 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, proposes to administer and implement BID programs. NewTown Macon offers an existing organization with a mission focused solely on the improvement of downtown to supplement the BID budget. Use of NewTown Macon will create cost efficiencies by leveraging the organization's existing administrative and management resources and capabilities with office and support services such as bookkeeping, office equipment and professional development and training for the staff and board of directors.

**2. Administration:**

To provide BID oversight and management, NewTown Macon will charge the actual cost share of services rendered plus 5% of cost as a management fee.

**3. Bookkeeping/Audit:**

The BID will require payroll services, bookkeeping, tax accounting and an annual audit.

**4. Real Estate:**

The BID will share office space with its non-profit manager.

**5. Insurance:**

The BID will obtain and maintain adequate insurance, including liability insurance for the BID board of directors.



**6. Contingency:**

The BID budget will include contingency funds for unforeseen BID expenses, which may also be used as a program reserve.

**III. BID COLLECTIONS AND ASSESSMENTS**

**A. Collections**

The Downtown Macon BID is projected to collect for downtown services and activities \$338,312 for its first program year, beginning in 2017. An additional \$30,000 in contributions from exempt properties is anticipated, resulting in a total BID budget of \$368,312. (Assessments are subject to final verification by city and county tax assessors) Initial budget projects are attached as an exhibit to this plan and summarized below:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Projected Cost</i>
Ambassadors	\$119,205
Clean Team	\$79,470
Direct Expenses	\$169,637
<b>Total Projected Expense</b>	<b>\$368,312</b>

**B. Methodology and Calculation of Assessments**

Property and business owners and other downtown stakeholders have emphasized that an assessment formula for a Downtown Macon BID be fair, balanced and commensurate with special benefits received. The proposed assessment methodology for the Downtown Macon BID is based upon the following parameters:

**1. Initial Assessment:**

The initial assessment will be five (5) mills assessed against the value of the property set by the Macon-Bibb Tax Assessor each year.

**2. Annual Budget Adjustments:**

The BID's Board of Directors may adjust annual budget rates for the BID for annual changes in the projected revenue. The board of directors is authorized to increase or reduce annual budgets varying from the original projections. The BID, however, must adopt and maintain a balanced budget.

**3. Maximum Rates of Assessment:**

In no event will assessment rates for individual properties exceed five (5) mills for the initial authorization term of the BID.

**4. Participation by Tax-Exempts:**

Under the Georgia BID statute, BID assessments apply only to "taxable property subject to ad valorem

real and personal property taxation". For tax-exempt organizations (i.e. museums, government, churches, etc.) the BID Steering Committee is seeking voluntary contributions. The BID board of directors is authorized to withhold BID services from exempt properties that do not voluntarily contribute to the BID.

**5. Participation by Residential Properties:**

For the Downtown Macon BID, all owner-occupied residential with homestead exemption will be exempt from BID assessments. Rental residential property is considered an income producing use and will be subject to the BID assessments.

**6. Ratepayer Engagement:**

The BID Board of Directors is authorized to conduct an annual satisfaction survey. The survey will be used to determine ratepayer satisfaction with existing services and priorities for new or improved services. An annual meeting for all ratepayers will be held each year. At the annual meeting, a proposed BID program budget will be presented for the subsequent year. Budget comments will be sought from ratepayers at the annual meeting and considered for incorporation into the final budget.

**7. Term of the District:**

The Downtown Macon BID will have a term of five (5) years, commencing upon institution of the district. At the end of five years, the BID must be renewed through the development of a new business plan, demonstration of support from ratepayers and approval by the Macon-Bibb County Commission

**IV. BID GOVERNANCE**

**A. Mission**

The BID is intended to provide a lasting foundation for an enduring and unified private sector voice in downtown Macon. The proposed BID governance and program management structure is intended to meet the following objectives:

- Avoid duplication with existing organizations that are currently working to promote and improve the central business district.
- Leverage limited resources and create cost efficiencies for existing and new services and programs.
- Strengthen downtown's influence for advocating common issues and interests.

**B. Board of Directors**

Macon-Bibb County government delegates to the BID Board of Directors the power to govern the BID, composed of affected property and business owners. Duties of the BID board of directors shall include developing annual budgets, setting assessment rates and monitoring the delivery of day-to-day services.

**1. Number and Ownership**

The board shall have seven (7) directors. With the exception of the ex officio members, all members of the Board of Directors must be ratepayers within the district at the time of election.

**2. Nomination, Appointment Process and Terms**

**a) Ex Officio**

(1) Mayor- The Mayor of Macon-Bibb County, or his or her designated representative will serve as a fully vested voting member of the Board of Directors. Should the Mayor designate this service, such designated representative shall serve entirely at the Mayor’s pleasure. This seat will transfer automatically with the office of the Mayor, even to interim office holders.

(2) NewTown- The Chair of the Board of NewTown Macon, Inc., its successors or assigns, or his or her designated representative will serve as a fully vested voting member of the Board of Directors. Should the Chair designate this service, such designated representative shall serve entirely at the Chair’s pleasure. This seat will transfer automatically with the office of the Chair, even to interim office holders.

**b) Nominations**

For the initial Board, NewTown Macon, Inc. will seek nominations from all ratepayers and then develop a suggested nomination slate that meets the selection criteria set within this plan. Thereafter, the Board of Directors will seek nominations from all ratepayers and then develop a suggested nomination slate that meets the selection criteria set within this plan. The slate will be presented to ratepayers at the annual meeting. A vote will be held on the slate.

**c) Elections**

Elections of BID Board of Directors by property owners will be decided at the BID annual meeting to be held in each year. NewTown Macon will call and coordinate the first meeting and collect, tally and report the votes. Thereafter, the Board of Directors will coordinate the meeting and collect, tally and report the votes. The meeting will be open to all ratepayers within the then-current BID boundaries. Only ratepayers who attend the meeting will be afforded a vote.

(1) By value- Three members of the Board of Directors shall be elected by the ratepayers of the district voting by the assessed value of the property they own within the district based on the most-recent tax digest adopted by Macon-Bibb County at the time of the vote. Votes will be weighted for each dollar of value owned by the ratepayer at the time of the vote. In the case of a tie, the Mayor of Macon-Bibb shall select the Director to serve.

(2) By parcel- Two members of the Board of Directors shall be elected by the ratepayers by the parcel owners. Votes will be weighted for each parcel owned by the ratepayer at the time of the vote. In the case of a tie, the Mayor of Macon-Bibb shall select the Director to serve.

**3. Terms**

The ex-officio members of the Board shall serve an unlimited term as long as they hold the office required to serve. The terms for the elected members of the BID board of directors shall be three (3) years, with a maximum of two consecutive terms. After an absence from the board for one year, individuals will be eligible to serve based on the limit stated herein. For the initial board, the delegates with the most votes from the election by value and by parcel will serve three-year terms. The delegates from each vote with the second most votes will serve two-year terms. The delegate with the third most votes from the vote by value will serve a one-year term. All subsequent terms will be for three years from the date of election.

**4. Reporting**

The BID board will make a report to the public on no less than an annual basis disclosing audited financial statements for all transactions and publicizing progress towards its goals to all rate payers.