The master plan for downtown Salisbury is designed as a set of strategies for attracting people, businesses, and investment to downtown. The master plan is a careful blending of physical projects needed to enhance downtown’s attractiveness and marketing initiatives required to communicate downtown’s assets to target audiences. Neither the physical nor the marketing strategies can stand alone. This chapter presents the marketing goals, strategies and concepts that are essential to downtown Salisbury’s success in attracting people, businesses and investment.

There are five primary marketing goals for downtown Salisbury that are linked to the strategies contained in this master plan. They are:

1. To build a regional identity for downtown Salisbury as the place to learn and experience the history of the Carolina Piedmont;
2. To build awareness, locally and regionally, of downtown Salisbury as specialty retail center;
3. To market downtown Salisbury as a desirable location for investment;
4. To develop downtown Salisbury’s reputation as an arts and cultural center highlighted by the East Square Arts and Cultural District;
5. To build understanding and support in Salisbury and Rowan County for the importance of downtown Salisbury and the master plan for all local residents.
1. The History Center of the Piedmont

The master plan outlines the unique opportunity that Salisbury has to become the center for learning and experiencing the history of the Piedmont. The foundation of the opportunity is the authentic people and events of Salisbury's past combined with Salisbury's wealth of preserved historic buildings. Salisbury has always thought of itself and marketed itself as "historic." Yet with the addition of the projects and initiatives described in the master plan, Salisbury can transition from simply being old to become a place rich in stories, events, and traditions of the past. Salisbury can become a place where history is experienced in a rich variety of forms and not simply glimpsed through historic architecture.

An important first step in marketing Salisbury as the center for Piedmont history is the creation of appropriate symbols, logos, graphics and tag lines. "Let Us Tell You Our Stories" is proposed as the theme and tag line for marketing Salisbury's history. The goal is to make Salisbury's physical history come alive through stories of people and events that shaped American and Piedmont history. The prototype ads on pages _—_ illustrate this theme.

In keeping with the theme of "public history" described in the master plan (the idea of taking Salisbury's history out of the history books and putting it on display on the streets of downtown Salisbury) it seems appropriate to develop a symbol for downtown Salisbury that can be displayed prominently on the streets of downtown Salisbury as well as on letterhead and business cards. The images at left and on the following page illustrate concepts for a downtown Salisbury logo. The handwritten "Salisbury" is intended to convey a sense of history that is very human rather than architectural. The flag motifs suggest symbols (representing American history or community ideals) in a design that is unique to Salisbury. The flag could become a very memorable symbol of downtown Salisbury, both in advertising and in its visible presentation at the Square.
HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

Every picture has a story.

And every story has its source.

Folks around here knew that if you wanted to hear a
tale of a good story, you went straight to the source,
Joe Rich. He knew just about everything. After all,
he spent his entire life in Downtown Salisbury, North
Carolina, in a house not far from the city center.

As the town’s only blacksmith for many years, a
progressive politician and informed philosopher,
Joe made knowing the town’s business his business—
well before it became history.

Already an old man in the early 1900s, there are a lot
of stories that Joe himself never heard. Like when
President Eisenhower stopped in Downtown Salisbury. Or the time when all the
residents grew long pioneer beards in honor of
the town’s bicentennial.

At 247 years old, Downtown Salisbury has a lot of
tales to tell. We think Joe would be proud.

Come for a visit. Stay for a story.

Did you hear the one about
Andrew Jackson and the Salisbury bar brawl?

Long before Andrew Jackson became the seventh
President of the United States, he was known in
Salisbury, North Carolina, simply as “Jack.” As the
story goes, while Jack studied law by day, he was
notorious for fighting in bar brawls by night.

Regardless of his reputation, we still like to think
of him as one of our native sons. After all, when he
wasn’t fighting he entertained friends and fellow
patriots with the amazing stories of his escapades.

Jack’s stories, and countless other Salisbury stories,
are just the type of tales that will never make it into
history books. But in Downtown Salisbury, North
Carolina, when it comes to history, we’ve got the
inside scoop.
George Washington never slept in this bed.

In fact, we didn’t leave a list of time for our country’s first president to rest when he visited Salisbury, North Carolina, in May of 1791.

We threw him the grandest bed the town had ever seen and then swept him away to a tea held by the ladies of the town. And then he left.

You won’t find the story of Washington’s visit to Salisbury recounted in history books. Nor will you find any eyewitnesses. The only proof—a brief note Washington made in his journal calling Salisbury, North Carolina, “a pleasant village.”

Today, more than 200 years later, this is still a pretty pleasant place. We’ve made a lot of history here, and we want to share it with you. Soon.
The upcoming 250th anniversary of the founding of Salisbury and Rowan County (2003) is a wonderful opportunity to unveil and promote Salisbury’s new identity as the historic center of the Piedmont. Selected projects and marketing efforts should be introduced during this time. With heightened media coverage, the anniversary year will be a once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape a regional identity for downtown Salisbury.

October Tour, an event sponsored by the Historic Salisbury Foundation, is a well-established and successful promotion that attracts visitors from throughout the region to tour Salisbury’s historic homes. Linking this event to other historic themed activities in downtown Salisbury is an excellent short-term opportunity to build awareness of Salisbury as the Piedmont’s historic center. Perhaps the tour could even include one or more downtown buildings or residences – creating a significant opportunity for showcasing downtown and downtown businesses.

Today, downtown Salisbury lacks a sufficient inventory of developed historic attractions to begin an aggressive historic tourism marketing campaign. Over time, as projects like the Ice House/Confederate Prison Interpretive Center, the Empire Hotel, and the improved and expanded Rowan Museum are developed and opened, downtown Salisbury will need a stronger, more ambitious visitors marketing effort. The prototype ads on the following page suggest how downtown Salisbury might be marketed to regional audiences in the future.
“May I have this dance?”

Sometimes, you can still hear that phrase whispered in what was once the grandest ballroom in all of North Carolina.

Unfortunately, the faded glory of the ballroom is no longer exists. At nearly 150 years old, the Empire has stood the test of time, surviving two world wars, prohibition, a national depression, and even a war between the states—when a Confederate prison occupied just at the other end of the street. Now, you can enjoy the more than two hundred opulent rooms—each uniquely decorated.

So, next time you’re thinking of getting away for the weekend, take the train into Downtown Salisbury. Book a room at The Empire. Visit the nearly 300 downtown specialty shops and restaurants. And capture some of yesterday’s elegance.

“All aboard!”

Years ago, the railway was Salisbury’s most modern and innovative connection to the outside world. Today, you can revive the old-fashioned charm of locomotive travel when you make a weekend or day-trip from Greensboro, to Downtown Salisbury.

Climb aboard the Piedmont or Carolina and, travel back in time to Downtown Salisbury. Enjoy an evening of high style with a glass of Sicilian Corvo di Salaparuta at La Cava, Salisbury’s Italian restaurant, and a plate of the house specialty, Giorni’s homemade pasta. Stroll under the gas-light sidewalk of Main Street as you make your way to Morrison Theatre for a night of entertainment provided by the Piedmont Players. Then retire for the evening in downtown’s most historic hotel, The Empire. Built in 1855 and recently renovated, The Empire offers two hundred rooms filled with regal elegance.

We may be only hours away from Greensboro, but we’ll see worlds apart.

Come for a visit and stay for a story.
Downtown Salisbury Master Plan

Retail Marketing

Downtown’s primary retail marketing challenge is to build awareness among local and regional residents of downtown as an attractive center for high quality, specialty retail and dining. Surveys reveal that local residents are not aware or simply do not appreciate the quantity and variety of specialty retail and restaurants available in downtown Salisbury today. One reason for this finding may be that there is little or no coordinated marketing at present of downtown Salisbury as a center of stores and restaurants. The ad series shown at left illustrates a concept for a coordinated ad series intended to showcase individual stores, while building on the theme of downtown as a large, diverse retail and dining center.

Market research suggests that downtown Salisbury is most likely to be successful as a specialty retail center rather than a place that meets the day-to-day needs of local residents. The prototype ad on page ... seeks to build an identity for downtown Salisbury as a special retail place: special occasions, special people, special gifts, etc. This is the retail market niche that downtown Salisbury needs to command.

Events can be a very effective retail marketing tool. Despite an aggressive promotions schedule, the efforts of Downtown Salisbury Inc. have been limited to the present time by the lack of a suitable gathering space in the retail core of downtown Salisbury. The physical plan suggests the redevelopment of Fisher Street as a downtown events space. This project would greatly expand the opportunities for retail promotions in downtown Salisbury.

Downtown Salisbury has little identity regionally as a retail center. With the loss of local customers to Concord Mills, Hanes Mall and other regional shopping centers Salisbury must find ways to attract more regional customers to its unique stores and historic environment. The development and marketing of historic and cultural attractions in downtown Salisbury should be considered an important part of downtown’s retail strategy.
There's something special about downtown Salisbury.

Special occasions, special gifts, special people.

When you're searching for that special something, think Downtown Salisbury. You'll find the largest retail center in the entire county all within close walking distance (and easy parking).

You see, Downtown Salisbury is nothing like the more than 20,000 small towns in America. Here, you'll discover community rich with people and products that are just as colorful as their 250 years of history.

So, come to Downtown Salisbury to shop awhile. Then, stay to experience more than two centuries of history. After all, some things only get better with time.

Salisbury
Since 1753
Downtown’s strongest retail attractions for regional customers are its antique, gift and collectible shops. The Emporium is one of few businesses that markets in the region and it attracts a relatively high percentage of out-of-town customers. Cannon Village in nearby Kannapolis has a well-organized cooperative marketing strategy. A similar cooperative marketing effort is recommended to help Salisbury attract more regional customers.

The other side of retail marketing is retail recruitment – attracting a desired mix of stores and restaurants to downtown Salisbury. The market analysis contained in the master plan identifies specific retail recruitment targets. The market data should master plan and available buildings and sites, and directed to desired business targets.

An excellent strategy for building downtown Salisbury’s image as a center for antiques and for identifying possible recruitment targets is to organize a special antiques show and sale (not a flea market). These events, properly promoted (perhaps in conjunction with October Tour?), attract thousands of shoppers and scores of dealers. A large, secure indoor space like the McCanless Garage would be ideal for such an event.

**Economic Development Marketing**

Downtown Salisbury has been fortunate in its ability to attract creative and capable developers to take advantage of real estate opportunities in downtown Salisbury. Many of the development challenges for the future – projects like the Empire Hotel, conversion of old warehouse buildings near the Depot, attracting a grocery store, and larger-scale residential developments – tend to be larger, more difficult projects than customary for downtown Salisbury. Attracting developers, financing and tenants to these projects will require the ability to make others believe the master plan and the community’s commitment to its success. Tools for effectively communicating the master plan are key to this effort.
The simplest and most effective tool is probably a foldout brochure similar in size and format to the “Salisbury 2000 Strategic Growth Plan” brochure that was done in the late 1980’s. The brochure would present the seven strategies of the master plan, the physical plan and sketches, and the marketing concepts.

Another highly effective tool is the use of a web page to provide interactive information, images and progress reports regarding the master plan. The master plan could be hosted on the existing Downtown Salisbury, Inc. web site. Given the vast array of graphics, data and other information that have been created for the master plan (and summarized for a printed brochure), a web version of the plan could be created at a modest cost.

Another highly recommended tool is a 15-minute slide (or Powerpoint) summary of the master plan. Such a presentation would have a wide variety of uses ranging from meetings with developers and prospects, to civic groups, to state and federal officials. Again, all of the graphics that have been created for the master plan are easily converted to this format. In addition, the Powerpoint format makes it easy to tailor presentations for specific audiences.

The final economic development marketing recommendation is the creation of a series of “Investment Opportunity Portfolios” that describe specific business or investment opportunities. The first might be a proposed development plan for the remaining portion of the Flowers Bakery property. Other investment opportunities to highlight might include a concept for the “Cheerwine Café” or “Steele’s Tavern.” The portfolios are created in-house using a consistent format or template and can be linked to on-site marketing signage:

- “Possible Future Location of the Cheerwine Café – call for information”
- “16 unit townhouse development opportunity – call for information”
MARKETING THE EAST SQUARE ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT

The convergence of arts and cultural activities in downtown’s East Square provides the opportunity for building a strong, coordinated arts and cultural identity for downtown Salisbury. The combination of Waterworks Gallery, the Rowan Museum, the NSSA Hall of Fame, the Depot, a farmers market, Jackson (?) Square Festival Center, Easy Street, and the F&M Events Center; all located within a 2-block radius from the Visitors Center; (in addition to the nearby Meroney Theater) creates a compact arts and cultural district of tremendous potential. The name “East Square Arts and Cultural District” provides a strong, unified identity. A possible logo for the district is presented at left.

In addition to a unified marketing identity, the East Square needs coordinated planning and marketing of its arts and cultural offerings. The possibilities include:

- A joint brochure listing all current exhibits, hours of operation, and providing maps and parking instructions;
- Pre-planned itineraries for school groups to allow maximum exposure to all facilities;
- One-ticket admission to a package of arts, cultural and historic sites;
- A coordinated schedule of special events throughout the year;
- Special signage and banners;
- Feature articles in regional newspapers and magazines
COMMUNITY MARKETING

Perhaps the most important marketing of all is communication with local citizens: taxpayers, property owners, businesses, church groups, students and all other members of the Salisbury/Rowan County community. Local citizens need to understand why downtown Salisbury is important to the entire community's identity, prosperity and quality of life - no matter where an individual lives. Furthermore, citizens need to understand the projects and investments that are outlined by the master plan, their purpose and their relationships. Most importantly, the community needs the opportunity to understand and respond to the vision for downtown Salisbury.

The marketing brochure described above is an excellent communications tool for local citizens and should be produced in quantities sufficient to meet community demand. A 15 minute slide (or Powerpoint) presentation is a useful tool for civic club luncheons, church and school groups, and other community meetings. The development of a speakers bureau and an organized campaign to reach all civic groups over a 3 to 6 month period is recommended to promote penetration of the master plan concepts throughout the community.

The local news media should be encouraged to communicate the master plan to area residents. A special master plan insert or other special coverage of the master plan should be planned and assisted by Downtown Salisbury Inc. to coincide with the public unveiling of the master plan.