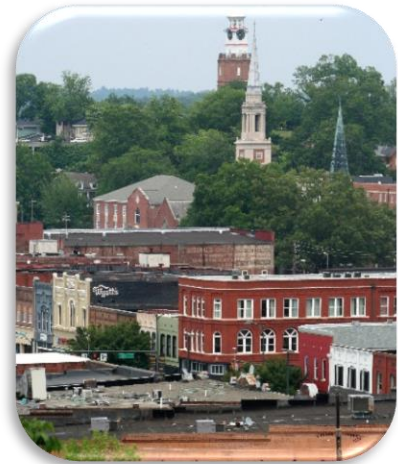


GREATER ROME, GEORGIA

Rome-Floyd 20/20

Market Street Services is a highly professional firm that was helpful to our community as we planned our economic future. They have the kind of insight, analytical ability and facilitation skills that we needed to create our own specific plan.

Al Hodge, President, Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce



Background

Located in northwest Georgia in Floyd County, the City of Rome is in the middle of a dynamic three-state region anchored by three large metropolitan areas: Atlanta, Chattanooga, and Birmingham. Rather than be resigned to be a small player in the midst of large metros, Greater Rome (the City of Rome and Floyd County) has adopted an aggressive economic development agenda that has resulted in tangible successes.

Led by a homegrown effort of Greater Rome leaders, and supported by Market Street research, the first economic development plan for Greater Rome, **Rome-Floyd 20/20**, was unveiled in 1998. Comprised of five key themes and 20 goals, the plan sought to establish community support and momentum for taking deliberate actions to improve the economy, build a skilled workforce, improve quality of life assets, build quality physical infrastructure and make more efficient use of government resources.

In 2003, during the fifth year of implementation, Greater Rome again partnered with Market Street to update the strategy and measure progress. By this time, implementation success was quite evident as progress had been made in all 20 goal areas. The update process identified additional opportunities and challenges, including ways to leverage the community's changing demographics, strengthen ongoing programs, and cultivate a culture of cooperation.

The second iteration of Rome-Floyd 20/20 was crafted in 2007 through Market Street and was a true partnership between the City of Rome, Floyd County, and the Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce, with costs shared equally. The **20/20 II** plan leveraged broader public input and focused on the workforce (developing a seamless Pre-K –16 education system), the economy (strengthening retention, attraction, and entrepreneurship), and the community (ensuring safety and strong leadership). Despite the Great Recession, Greater Rome continued its implementation successes. *Forbes* profiled Rome as a top place to live in 2007; *U.S. News and World Report* ranked Rome High School as among the best in the nation in 2009.

In 2012, Market Street was engaged yet again to facilitate the third iteration of the Rome-Floyd 20/20 Strategy, which reengaged and galvanized volunteers, staff, and partners, many of whom were involved in the first planning process 15 years earlier.



Implementation Highlights

The commitment to implementing Rome-Floyd 20/20 has endured since its inception in 1998. The community buy-in, public sector support, and private sector participation have given Rome-Floyd 20/20 momentum and resulted in many tangible successes.

- The community established the Future Industries Initiative (FII), which has been instrumental in charting a strategic course to attract and retain innovative and high-value companies. The group is comprised of top leadership from the three medical centers, the four institutions of higher education, and the public and private Pre-K–12 schools. The extraordinary cooperation among the medical centers—Harbin Clinic, Redmond Regional, and Floyd Medical—paved the way for a \$1.7 million grant for a cancer patient-centered health information exchange based in Rome as well as the Northwest Clinical Campus of the Medical College of Georgia.
- The City of Rome has received many accolades for its quality of life and business climate: the 2003 National Great American Main Street Award; a 2004 Preserve America Community by the Department of the Interior; recognition as a top place to live by *Forbes* in 2007; and designation as an Entrepreneur Friendly community by the Georgia Department of Economic Development.
- A minor league baseball stadium was built and Rome continues to be the home of the Rome Braves, the Class A affiliate of the Atlanta Braves.
- In 2011, Lowe’s announced that it would invest \$125 million and build a 1.4 million square foot distribution center in Rome, which would bring an anticipated 600 jobs. The deal earned the Deal of the Year Award from the Georgia Economic Development Association.
- In 2011, Georgia Highlands College announced it received approval to transition to become a four-year degree granting college, becoming the third such institution in Rome.
- The Chamber-sponsored technology conference, Confluence, is currently in its sixth iteration and has featured technology experts from *Wired* magazine, Boeing, and the Georgia Institute of Technology.
- As a result of Rome-Floyd 20/20 new educational assets have been developed, and are developing, to proactively address some educational challenges, which include a new elementary school with a specialized Pre-K program for three-year-olds and the Floyd County College & Career Academy, a partnership with local employers and the technical college.
- In 2016, the community celebrated the grand opening of a 30-acre new tennis center that resulted from a partnership between the City, Berry College, Coosa Valley Tennis Association, the Chamber, and the Greater Rome Convention & Visitors Bureau.
- Recent job announcements include the United States headquarters of Balta Group, Europe’s largest producer of textile floor coverings. Balta will create 75 jobs in a renovated 320,000 s.f. facility as part of an investment group’s broader revitalization of a 172-acre site.

