



# Downtown Upper Marlboro Economic Development Firm

Town of Upper Marlboro

## Contact

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## Firm

Better City, LLC

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# Cover Letter

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July 1, 2022

Dear Selection Committee,

It is a privilege to provide this response to Upper Marlboro's Request for Proposal for an Economic Development Firm. Better City, LLC has extensive experience in assisting communities throughout the country leverage their unique assets and strengths to reach their economic development goals. Better City provides services such as strategic planning, economic development capacity enhancement, project implementation services.

We applaud Upper Marlboro for the foresight to support revitalization, business, and property maintenance. We believe the development of pedestrian and bike friendly connections between commercial centers and the development of cohesive branding and outdoor amenities are strategies that will support the economic resilience of Upper Marlboro as these approaches create a place that provides quality of life and a vibrant business environment.

Our recommendation is that through the first six months of this engagement, in addition to economic development capacity enhancement services, Better City will provide Upper Marlboro with a Strategic Plan that prioritizes ongoing efforts and identifies the community's vision for economic development, along with a variety of targeted strategies for implementing this Plan. This process would include the creation of supporting materials to use in marketing and outreach to businesses.

We would be honored to work with you. Please feel free to contact me directly regarding any questions.

Best Regards,



Jason Godfrey

Chief Executive Officer

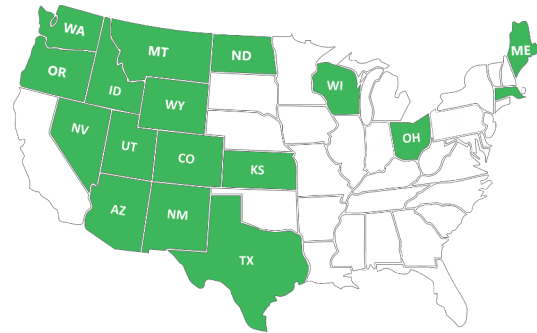


# About Better City

## Broad Experience

Better City has a wide range of experience, with over 50 municipal clients in 17 states. *The clients served in the past five years are on the right.*

We are a National Firm—with personnel located in Utah, Texas, Ohio, and Georgia. Our diverse team of highly-qualified professionals with experience in both the public and private sectors brings **perspective and strategic input from best practices across the U.S.**



## Results Oriented

Better City was established in 2012 after its founder transformed his city, Ogden Utah, from a blighted and stagnant community to a model of urban renewal (ranked by Forbes in the top 10 cities to raise a family.)

The Better City team provides strategies that make a tangible impact on the local economy of our client communities. **We have a track record of success in project implementation.** Please see the following pages for select examples of projects with similar scopes to that of Upper Marlboro.

## Small & Focused

Our small firm has a track record of effective collaboration. We pick and choose our engagements based on how well they fit our expertise and our capacity. Upper Marlboro would be 1 of 7 ongoing implementation clients, and would receive quality attention and dedicated service. Unlike large firms, **our principles work directly with project managers to service clients.**

| Client                             | Strategic Plan | Project Implementation | Dates of Engagement         |
|------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Summit County, CO                  | ✓              |                        | 2022                        |
| Wasatch Front Regional Council, UT | ✓              |                        | 2022                        |
| Detroit, OR                        | ✓              |                        | 2021                        |
| Gates, OR                          | ✓              |                        | 2021                        |
| Bangor, ME                         | ✓              |                        | 2021                        |
| Syracuse, UT                       | ✓              |                        | 2020                        |
| Raton, NM                          | ✓              | ✓                      | 2019 - 2021                 |
| Mills, WY                          | ✓              |                        | 2019 - 2021                 |
| Meeker, CO                         | ✓              | ✓                      | 2018 - 2019                 |
| Gerlach, NV                        | ✓              | ✓                      | 2018                        |
| Humboldt County, NV                | ✓              | ✓                      | 2018                        |
| Lordsburg, NM                      | ✓              |                        | 2018                        |
| Green River, UT                    | ✓              | ✓                      | 2017 - Ongoing              |
| Buena Vista, CO                    | ✓              |                        | 2017                        |
| Anthony, KS                        | ✓              | ✓                      | 2017                        |
| Rio Blanco County, CO              | ✓              | ✓                      | 2016 - 2017                 |
| Moffat County, CO                  | ✓              |                        | 2016                        |
| Lake County, CO                    | ✓              |                        | 2015 - 2019                 |
| Wells, NV                          | ✓              | ✓                      | 2014 - Ongoing              |
| Tooele County, UT                  |                | ✓                      | 2021 - Ongoing              |
| East Liverpool, OH                 |                | ✓                      | 2013 - 2015, 2020 - Ongoing |
| Superior, CO                       |                | ✓                      | 2019 - Ongoing              |
| Clearfield, UT                     |                | ✓                      | 2019 - 2020                 |
| Silver City, NM                    |                | ✓                      | 2018 - Ongoing              |
| Riverton, UT                       |                | ✓                      | 2016                        |

# Similar Projects

## East Liverpool, Ohio

### Neighborhood Revitalization Plan & Downtown Redevelopment

East Liverpool, Ohio experienced significant population decline as the manufacturing industries collapsed. The business exodus resulted in a hollowed-out downtown core and deteriorating neighborhoods. Better City was hired in 2013 to assist with revitalization in the downtown, and again in 2019 to assist with residential blight, improving quality of life, and other economic development initiatives.

#### Outcome – Capacity Enhancement | 2013 – 2015

- Curated a for-profit vocational school to rehabilitate and preserve two vacant buildings totaling 35,000 square feet in the historic downtown.
- Facilitated \$6.8 million transaction by securing a pre-development grant, Community Development Block Grants from the State, City, and County as well as State and Federal Historic Tax Credits, State and Federal New Markets Tax Credits, tax increment financing, debt, and investors.
- Recruited a multi-family housing developer for a 45-unit \$9.2 million workforce housing development.
- Reduced blight, provided workforce training programs, developed workforce housing, and added to the local tax base.

#### Outcome – Capacity Enhancement | 2019 – Present

- Secured grants for a housing blight remediation initiative, riverfront trail, downtown master plan, and other projects.
- Applied for and received AmeriCorps NCCC volunteer assistance.
- Created Neighborhood Revitalization Plan.
- Created New Business Startup Guide as resource to support new businesses navigate the challenges of opening in East Liverpool.



#### Reference

Greg Bricker  
Mayor, City of East Liverpool  
330-385-3381  
[g.bricker@eastliverpool.com](mailto:g.bricker@eastliverpool.com)

# Green River, Utah

## Economic Vision & Strategic Plan & Implementation

The small community of Green River, Utah faced several boom-and-bust cycles across multiple industries including uranium mining, agriculture, and a military missile base. The current population of the city is less than 30 percent of its peak and the City has a significant challenge of dealing with neglected properties that have resulted from the economic decline.

### Planning Outcomes - Strategic Recommendations | Mar – Oct 2017

- Activate the river as a recreational amenity.
- Focus on community appearance, enforcing code, and ensure that City-owned properties are well maintained.
- Facilitate the development of value-added food manufacturing.
- Assemble land and fund initial infrastructure for planned industrial park.
- Remediate brownfield properties in the downtown core.

### Outcome – Capacity Enhancement | 2017 – Present

- Provided 16 responses to requests for information from site selectors for industrial projects.
- Identified River Restoration firm to conduct planning and implementation of riverfront enhancement project.
- Created a Business Resource Guide to provide business owners with information on local, regional, and national technical assistance and funding resources.
- Prepared Community Reinvestment Area request to enable the City to use tax increment financing to support economic development.
- Facilitating development of industrial park and new commercial district



#### Reference

Conae Black  
City Administrator  
435-564-3448

[cblack@greenriverutah.com](mailto:cblack@greenriverutah.com)

# Silver City, New Mexico

## Workforce Development Strategy & Human Capital Alignment

The Town of Silver City periodically collaborated with other municipalities and non-profits to secure grants and conduct economic development studies. There was no funding for implementation and many of the strategies were not executed. The Town and other stakeholders desired assistance in creating a sustainable program for economic development.

### Outcome – Capacity Enhancement | Oct 2018 – Present

- Reviewed 15 past studies and plans to identify viable and catalytic projects to move the community past the planning phase.
- Developed relationships with various stakeholders and coordinated stewardship roles including the local University, School District, and Main Street to align and coordinate efforts supporting entrepreneurship, workforce development, and downtown revitalization.
- Created a Workforce Development Strategic Plan.
- Assisted with establishing a local economic development organization (EDO) focused on workforce development and funded through private and public members.
- Assisted with hiring of the Executive Director who is responsible for executing strategic initiatives including implementing the Workforce Development Strategic Plan and overseeing and coordinating the project task forces.
- Wrote the grant application to secure a \$500,000 EDA grant to hire a dedicated local economic development staff member.
- Coordinated development of project steering committees to implement on key projects.
- Created several subcommittees to coordinate on projects and ensure buy-in and agreement from elected officials, government staff, local businesses, and nonprofits.



#### Reference

Priscilla Lucero, SWNM COG  
575-388-1509  
[priscillalucero@gilanet.com](mailto:priscillalucero@gilanet.com)



# Superior, Colorado

## Business Retention & Recruitment Services & Economic Advisory

Superior has multiple retail centers and office complexes, with a new mixed use downtown under development. They hired Better City to conduct a variety of economic development services, including filling in vacant spaces, assisting with business retention efforts, and providing market insights to community leaders.

### Ongoing Process | 2019 – Present

- Provide monthly reports on economic development and retail analysis.
- Conduct outreach for business recruitment with a focus on experiential retail, destination attractions, and economic development prospects.
- Assist with business retention efforts, particularly in recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and Marshall Fire.
- Provide advisory and implementation services to support economic development.

### Outcome – Capacity Enhancement | 2019 – Present

- Created marketing brochures and flyers.
- Assisted in the design and provided copy for a brand-new economic development website (<https://superior-business.org>).
- Facilitated meetings with prospects at ICSC and EEE conferences.
- Conducted outreach to each locally owned businesses to find out what immediate needs were during the COVID-19 pandemic and after the Marshall Fire, and helped the Town roll out a series of support grants.
- Provided social media posts for community outreach in 'shop local' campaigns.
- Provided input and assistance in structuring a business incentive program.



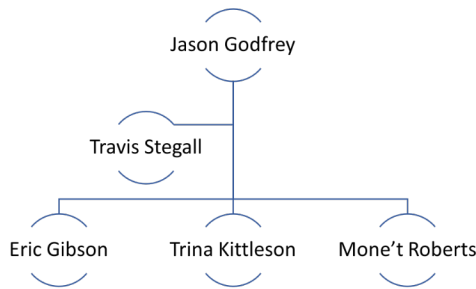
#### Reference

Jill Mendoza  
Economic Development Manager  
303-499-3675 ext. 141  
[jillm@superiorcolorado.gov](mailto:jillm@superiorcolorado.gov)



# Our Team

**All consultants listed are available and ready and able to assist Upper Marlboro.**



Our team has a wide breadth of experience, including real estate development, small business / entrepreneurship, public administration, management consulting, small business consulting, and senior management in Fortune 500 companies.

We have worked with communities across the country to implement their strategic plans – writing feasibility studies, recruiting businesses, securing grants, leading business retention and expansion efforts, and building community amenities. **We have the real-world, boots-on-the-ground experience, and know how to identify and execute projects that have significant impact on the community.**

## Jason Godfrey, CEO



Jason's extensive experience facilitating strategic development in both the public and private sectors makes him a skilled project manager who ensures clear communication with the client, stakeholders, and the project team.

- Real estate development
- Actionable strategic planning
- Local capacity building
- Project financing



### Education

- MBA, Rice University
- BA, Economics, Weber State University



### Select Experience

#### Economic Development Strategic Plan

- Anthony, KS
- Lake County, CO
- Marion County, OR
- Buena Vista, CO
- Bangor, ME
- Moffat County, CO

#### Other Experience

- Managing Director – Newpoint Advisors
- CEO – RioStones
- Director of Real Estate Development – Spindrift Development
- Associate Director, Public Works – Salt Lake County

## Travis Stegall



- Real Estate (Funding, REIT, Acquisition)
- Organizational Management (CAPM)
- Community Development (CDBG, CDBG-DR, HOME, HOPWA, ESG)

With experience as a municipal Economic and Community Development Director, a Corporate Director for business retention and development, and various roles within commercial and residential wholesale finance who negotiated over \$450 million in real estate development, Travis provides strategic insights to bring goals to reality.



### Education

- Georgia Economic Development Certification – Carl Vinson Institute
- BS Business Administration, Georgia State University



### Select Experience

#### Economic Development Experience

- City of Brunswick Economic and Community Development Director
- WFE, LLC Director of Economic Development Operations
- National Community and Economic Development Center Program Manager
- Litton Loan Servicing Senior Project Manager
- Georgia Mortgage & Realty LLC E.V.P of Commercial Lending

## Eric Gibson, Director of Strategic Analysis



- Data analysis
- Feasibility studies
- Strategic planning
- Technical grant applications

A data-guru familiar with a plethora of datasets and analytical approaches, Eric conducts analyses and creates user-friendly dashboards so clients can see and understand their data.



### Education

- MS, Economics, Purdue University (Candidate)
- BS, International Business Economics & BA, English, Weber State University



### Select Experience

#### Economic Development Strategic Plan

- Detroit, OR
- Gates, OR
- Green River, UT
- Syracuse, UT
- Wells, NV
- Lordsburg, NM
- Buena Vista, CO
- Bangor, ME
- Raton, NM
- Gerlach, NV
- Meeker, CO
- Humboldt County, NV

#### Economic Development Consulting

- Wells, NV
- Raton, NM

## Trina Kittleson, Director of Business Operations



- Research and Composition
- Report Writing
- Graphic Design
- Grant Writing

Trina has an eye for detail and has crafted strategic plans and a wide variety business support resources. She creates the format and composition of deliverables to ensure they are user friendly and facilitate implementation.



### Education

- MPA, Brigham Young University
- BA, English & Liberal Arts, Southern Virginia University



### Select Experience

#### Economic Development Strategic Plan

- Detroit, OR
- Gates, OR
- Mills, WY
- Green River, UT
- Syracuse, UT
- Summit County, CO
- Wasatch Front Regional Council, UT

#### Economic Development Consulting

- Superior, CO
- East Liverpool, OH
- Meeker, CO

## Mone't Roberts, Consultant



- Plan Writing
- Digital Design
- Marketing
- Public Engagement

Mone't is experienced in communications and engaging diverse audiences. She coordinates interviews and public engagement.



### Education

- MPA, Cleveland State University
- BA, Promotional Communications, Cleveland State University



### Select Experience

#### Economic Development Strategic Plan

- Bangor, ME
- Summit County, CO
- Lake County, CO



# Cost Proposal

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**Monthly Fee: \$5,900**

**Flat Yearly Rate : \$70,800**

The not-to-exceed Cost Proposal has been developed based on experience on dozens of similar engagements conducted by Better City throughout the country. The pricing is fixed and guaranteed.

The Firm establishes cost based on the level of effort that will be required of principals and staff to conduct research and orchestrate projects. Based on the scope of work elements included in the RFP the fixed-fee for this proposal is a monthly fee of \$5,900. This makes the total annual fee of \$70,800.

We bill projects as a fixed-fee so there is no risk to the client of cost over-runs. The expenses represent an estimate but regardless of the actual costs will be billed at the rates indicated. If the project requires more time and resources than anticipated, those costs will be born exclusively by Better City.

*Travel costs for two trips annually are included in the fee based on anticipated cost of airfare, hotel, and food expenses for trips. If the client requests additional in-person visits, an additional travel budget must be approved by the client before the trip.*

# Scope of Work & Approach

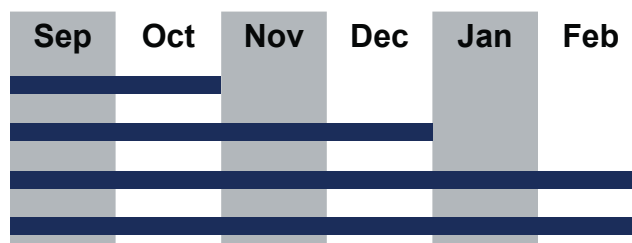
## Categories

Facilitate Input

Evaluate Area & Identify Improvements

Develop & Implement Strategic Plan

Consulting



We divided the elements in the RFP's Scope of Work into the following categories: Facilitate Input, Evaluate Area & Identify Improvements, Develop & Implement Strategic Plan, and Consulting. Following is a breakdown of which area each point falls into, and Better City's Approach for providing the economic development services for each.

## Facilitate Input

### From RFP

- Facilitate, record, and process information gathered from a determined number of stakeholder meetings and other means to collect public input, including resident surveys.

## Philosophy

Utilize project-specific websites engage a wider and more diverse portion of the population than those who traditionally participate in public planning. The community can access all information and give input via survey and community idea wall.

## Tasks

- Coordinate with Client to create inventory of community stakeholders and identify community outreach approach that aligns with community expectations.
- Conduct stakeholder engagement, including approximately 20 interviews and 3 focus groups.
  - We will do as many stakeholder interviews in-person as we can schedule in a 2-day visit, others will be virtual. Focus groups are usually in-person, however if requested we can conduct virtually.
- Launch project webpage with interactive map or idea wall and a public survey.
- Deliverable: Summary of input.

**Timeline:** First 2 months of engagement



# Evaluate Area & Identify Improvements

## From RFP

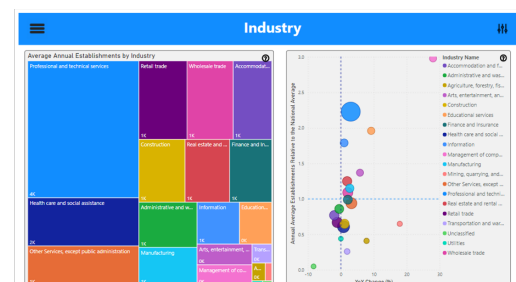
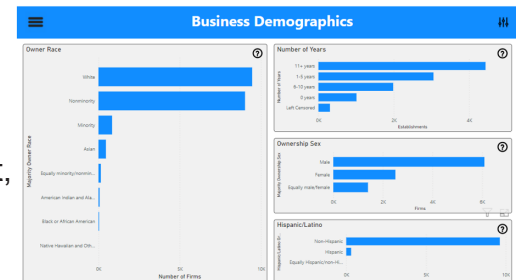
- Evaluate existing traffic patterns and make recommendations, particularly to increase the pedestrian friendliness of walking to Main Street from residential areas and other current or planned commercial centers.
- Evaluate existing parking and make recommendations for future needs, this should include implementation strategies for enhancing and expanding downtown parking.
- Identify public space improvements.
- Identify strategies to enhance downtown gateways, commercial centers, and create a visual connection between areas via branding.
- Identify ways to improve Downtown Upper Marlboro's walk and bike scores.
- Identify opportunities and provide vision for mixed-use infill development that maintains the character and walkability of the downtown district.

## Philosophy

We distill the many potential recommendations down into those few that are immediately actionable, high impact, and will move the community towards its vision. These are based on through analysis of the community and relevant data.

## Tasks

- Create data dashboard and analyze economic conditions, demographics, and trends of the local and regional economy.
  - See <https://bettercity.us/community-dashboard> for example
- Analyze the Town's existing programs and policies, potential sites for development and redevelopment, economic base(s), and opportunities.
- Identify specific strategies to enhance pedestrian friendliness, parking, public spaces, downtown gateways and commercial centers, downtown branding, walk and bike scores, and mixed-use infill.
- Deliverables:
  - Report regarding trends, projected areas of growth, and opportunities
    - This will include specific and actionable strategies for each objective outlined above.
  - Digital copy of all reference data and preliminary study documents



**Timeline:** First 4 months of engagement



# Develop & Implement Strategic Plan

## From RFP

- Create business retention and attraction strategies including identifying specific business types to target.
- Identify methods to encourage and incentivize investment in commercial properties by area property owners.
- Recommend strategies to develop a environmental tourism market in Upper Marlboro.
- Prepare implementation strategies to achieve goals and objectives and assign responsibilities.

## Philosophy

Better City's process begins by defining the Client's goals and working backwards to ensure that the approach will achieve desired outcomes. Better City would create an Economic Development Strategic Plan that specifies the specific objectives for business retention, the target industries for business recruitment, outlines the marketing strategy, and incentives for commercial property development/redevelopment.

The Better City team would proceed to implement the Strategic Plan, including conducting marketing efforts, developing programs, and pursue funding as needed.

## Tasks

- Lead work session with the Advisory Committee to identify the objectives. Present potential strategies—along with their feasibility and potential impact.
- Create a visually dynamic and user-friendly Strategic Plan.
- Determine the prioritization of specific business outreach and recruitment initiatives.
- Create list of businesses recruitment targets.
- Develop marketing materials for business recruitment, redevelopment, and tourism.
- Coordinate with relevant stakeholders to further additional strategies.
- Deliverables:
  - Economic Development Strategic Plan with a phased implementation plan
  - Marketing materials for attracting new businesses
  - Marketing materials for tourism
  - Funding plans/options

**Timeline:** Complete Strategic Plan in first 6 months of engagement, create marketing materials in 3 months, and conduct implementation throughout engagement.

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# Consulting

## From RFP

- Assist the Town in completing its 10-year Vision Plan that currently underway.
- Review and support the Town's Building Improvement Program with the Sustainable Communities Working Group.
- Attend regular Town meetings and work sessions.
- Assist the Town with its designation as a Main Street Affiliate and assist with developing a business group and possible Main Street Manager.

## Philosophy

Better City will be an active part of the economic ecosystem, participating in relevant work groups and councils. Active participation enables the team to address local issues that detract from a healthy business climate in which local businesses can prosper and grow.

## Tasks

- Provide input on the 10-year Vision Plan. Ensure that the objectives in the Economic Development Strategic Plan aligns with the Vision Plan.
- Attend meetings and work groups as directed by the Advisory Committee.
- Coordinate efforts for designation as Main Street Affiliate.
- Facilitate a business advisory group and regular meetings.
- Provide assistance in identifying funding for and hiring a Main Street Manager as needed.
- Hold regular update calls with Advisory Committee. (We recommend either once or twice a month.)
- Deliverables:
  - Monthly Reports.
  - Recommendations and renderings and other supporting materials for the Town's Vision Plan

**Timeline:** Throughout engagement