

DRAFT

The City of Powell
Strategic Marketing Communications Plan

EXHIBIT

CITY COUNCIL
10/16/01 **Exhibit 3**

By Griffin Communications
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Executive Summary

Community leaders in Powell have embarked on a mission to develop a communications plan aligned with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 1995 and with the city's mission statement. It is part of the city's continuing efforts to plan for the future - one that foresees ever increasing competition among communities to attract and retain residents, foster economic development, and solidify a tax base that supports the service levels residents demand and have come to expect.

In short, Powell leaders know they must strategically and proactively build and promote Powell's brand identity. They must tell "The Powell Story" to key stakeholders including current and potential residents, the business community and the greater Central Ohio community.

With the assistance of the Powell City Council, City Manager Steve Lutz and several Powell staff members, Griffin Communications has been able to learn a great deal about the City of Powell, its many strengths, challenges and exciting plans for the future. Our firm has devoted over 150 hours gathering information, analyzing the city's communications pieces and planning documents and developing recommendations, strategies and tactics to achieve Powell's communications goals.

Now is an exciting time for Powell's story to be told. Powell has an opportunity to identify its many unparalleled quality-of-life amenities, its uncommon level of municipal service delivery, and its unique way of life and then carefully craft communications vehicles by which to tell its story.

The marketing communications and branding recommendations in this document are aimed at creating a higher profile for Powell, improving recognition and, ultimately, attracting new residents and desired, complementary small businesses to the community. In short, the city should be viewed as a model by which other communities measure their own success.

If nurtured and conveyed consistently, the brand established and marketed for Powell today will have a positive impact on the community for generations of Powell residents.

Powell is clearly not the tiny crossroads of 50 or even 20 years ago. However, nor is it one of the larger, urban "edge cities" found along and beyond the I-270 outerbelt. Powell is unique. It is steeped in history; peaceful, scenic and affluent and at the same time a dynamic community with leadership focused on a vision for Powell and its residents: maximum service delivery and a comfortable, sustainable and rewarding lifestyle for those who choose to live in Powell.

Consider the following:

- In 2001, Powell became a city as defined by the United States Census Bureau. Perhaps more significant than the new designation is the pace at which Powell has achieved city status. In 1980, the population of Powell was 378 and, according to the 2000 U. S. census, Powell's current population is 6247, a dramatic increase in just 20 years.
- Powell residents enjoy some of the most comprehensive municipal services of any community in Greater Columbus. Infrastructure maintenance, snow removal, police protection and the new parks and recreation programs arguably rank ahead of most communities in Ohio. This is important because many residents of Liberty Township share a Powell mailing address but do not actually reside within the city limits. Thus many people purchasing in "Powell" are not actually eligible for the same high level of services.
- The Comprehensive Plan developed for Powell in 1995 contains many components that already have been implemented. As the community steadily has grown, elected officials and the administration team has made great strides making sure the vision for Powell outlined in the plan becomes reality. They are forward thinking in their vision for Powell.
- While Olentangy Schools serve the families in Powell, this highly regarded school district is one of the largest (in square miles) in the state of Ohio. Powell must rely on its other advantages to attract and keep families in the community.
- Powell is not located adjacent to any of the main highways and roadways of Greater Columbus, thus making large scale commercial development and the tax base that accompanies it unlikely. As the community reaches build-out and the tax base plateaus, ample funding will become a critical issue for the city leaders.
- At the same time, Powell is nestled in one of the most scenic areas in central Ohio, the Olentangy River Valley, and yet within minutes of those major highways. Thus, residents can experience both a sense of rural isolation and ready access to the amenities of a large metropolitan area.

As you review our recommendations, think about how the elements of the plan fit with the plans for the community, the comprehensive plan and Council's vision. Like any other business function undertaken by the city - the communications function must be planned, budgeted, implemented and evaluated. This document is an outline to guide that effort and to help build a strong brand identity for the city. We identified seven key elements of the marketing communications approach by which we organized this document and developed correlating strategies and tactics. They are 1) Brand Identity, Promotion and Marketing Communications; 2) Resident Communications; 3) Employee Communications; 4) Economic Development and Business Marketing; 5) Future Planning; 6) Greater Columbus Community at Large; 7) Media Relations.

Like any good marketing communications plan, the strategies and tactics proposed in this document are integrated and will be most effective if they are allowed to unfold strategically and a commitment is made to consistency in look, tone and message. However, we also clearly understand the budget constraints faced by a government entity that may prohibit the full implementation of the plan. To that end, it is important that once the final version of the plan is approved, priorities be determined by mapping the plan over a two- to three-year period. Although we have paid special attention to recommending cost-effective measures, we also recommend exploring the feasibility of public-private partnerships and sponsors who share your vision for Powell and are willing to share in the cost of implementation.

The hard work in bringing this document to life is yet to come. Griffin Communications is honored to have been part of the process of putting together your branding and communications plan. Your team's diligence has helped ensure that we are presenting a plan that meets your objectives and is on target with your goals.

Summary of Information Gathering and Interviews

Griffin Communications began the process by reviewing existing communications efforts, studying the comprehensive plan produced for Powell in 1995 and by interviewing 15 Powell staff and city council members. Each interview lasted from 45 minutes to over 2 hours with the average session lasting 1-1/2 hours.

Griffin Communications interviewed members of staff and council with a two-fold purpose in mind. First, we wanted to develop well-targeted recommendations for the brand identity based on a sound understanding of a current situation analysis and the input of those who operate the city and make policy decisions. Secondly, we wanted to identify priorities, perceptions (both accurate and inconsistent), competitive advantages, challenges and expectations.

Here is a summary of findings from our interviews:

Brand Image and Identity

- Among all who were interviewed, there is some concern that Powell's brand image, particularly with the Greater Central Ohio Community, is either outdated, ill defined or non-existent. Most believed it is ill defined and not communicated strategically.
- Those we interviewed felt that, even with the residents, it is important that a clear, consistent and sustainable brand identity be cultivated and nurtured. Residents are, after all, the primary customers of Powell's amenities and services and their long-term allegiance to the brand is critical. In addition, residents of Powell are the best sources for information about the community and ambassadors when they interact with their co-workers, family and friends and others outside of Powell.
- Most we interviewed defined what they thought was Powell's brand much the same way. There was, in fact, little variation. However, all indicated with the same consistency their belief that Powell has not as a City defined its brand and does not uniformly, consistently or strategically communicate it to any of its stakeholders. All clearly understand the power of the brand and are anxious to build it, live it and communicate it with employees, residents, businesses and the community at large.
- Council members interviewed would like Powell to be viewed as they know it is -- a successful, safe, open, friendly place as well as a great community for raising a family. Although all believe that Powell is that, they don't believe others outside the city necessarily do. Several noted the desire for Powell to be seen as a "walking community" and a "well-run community."

Prosperous and Attractive

- Powell council members all described that residents are attracted to Powell for virtually the same reasons they themselves were: good housing values, schools, safety and a country-like atmosphere that is close and convenient to the amenities of the big city. Powell is an affluent community of professionals with a median age of around 35. Powell is comprised of mostly new, upscale homes on large lots in subdivisions that take advantage of the scenic landscape. Council members and staff describe Powell as serene, a sanctuary, visually appealing and well planned.
- Other advantages of Powell mentioned: bike paths and parks, high visual quality, quaintness, high service delivery and a good police department.
- Many interviewees mentioned the emerging Parks and Recreation Department, parkland development and the system of bike paths throughout the community as the most recent and notable additions to Powell. All three are seen as contributing a great deal to the community's quality of life.
- Powell's staff described the community residents as prosperous, well-educated and hard working. The people who purchase homes in Powell, whether young families or empty nesters, have worked hard for their success and are proud of their homes, which are quality-built, large and expensive, although the buyer gets "a lot of home and yard for the money compared to other communities." The community also has many single income households.

Service Oriented

- Service delivery was the most prominent theme that emerged from discussions from staff, as well as council members. Each staff interviewee was not only proud of his or her own work, but also of the "unparalleled" level of service delivery from the city overall. Each pointed to specific instances in which they have worked individually with residents and council members and have received positive feedback. It was noted that the fairly low number of complaints was an indirect testament to the city's service delivery, but that no complaints was the goal. A sense of teamwork was apparent.
- Because of Powell's small size, adequate funding and narrow demographics, delivering satisfactory service is achievable and achieved. Every staff member interviewed had a clear understanding of his or her role, responsibilities and the process by which to perform and to evaluate.
- Staffers speak of knowing residents personally and recognizing residents when they visit the municipal building or the police station. There seems to be a high level of enthusiasm on the part of city staff relative to service delivery and working with residents.

- Excellent police service, almost immediate response time and a low crime rate contribute to the impression that Powell is a very safe place. There is a great deal of pride in the fact that the roughly 3.5 square mile city is patrolled by a highly trained and technologically savvy police department. The visibility of the police department contributes to the notion that all service delivery in Powell is hands-on and personal.
- A review of Powell's newsletter and other materials reveals a great deal of emphasis on delivering city services. Many photos were noted of Powell maintenance crews throughout the village working on trees, landscape projects, snow removal and even changing light bulbs in lampposts.
- Council members speak highly of the team in place at city hall and appear proud to oversee a staff of highly dedicated and attentive personnel.

Planning for the future – Maintaining service levels

- All discussions of Powell's services were also conversations about high expectations on the part of residents and the need to assure adequate funding in the future to maintain the high level of service.
- As the community's infrastructure begins to age, there will be a growing need for routine repairs and updates. Interviewees seem aware of the need, in the not too distant future, to secure new or increased sources of revenue in order to maintain the level of services residents have come to expect, as well as proceed with an ambitious menu of capital projects currently on the drawing board. High on the list are a new police station, continued development of the parks system and the "Village Green" project. Council members also expressed some concern that various neighborhoods will eventually compete for limited capital dollars as roads and infrastructure mature and the need to address capital planning intensifies.
- Interviewees conveyed that Powell has an established list of capital needs and that future infrastructure maintenance investments would need to be made; however, as planning continues, the funding source for those projects is unclear at this point in time. Most indicated a need to communicate these needs to the community and begin to determine how much can be done and how it can be funded.
- When asked about opportunities for improvement, just a couple of suggestions were mentioned often: a more active parks and recreation department, an implemented traffic plan (connectivity among subdivisions), improved communications both internally and externally, a distinct brand for Powell and progress on the village hall and village green.

Internal Communications

- Even though the village is run smoothly and employees appear to enjoy their work, almost every staffer noted that there is room for improvement regarding internal communications. From the top down an improved internal communications structure is needed and desired by employees.
- Each staff member interviewed volunteered support and admiration for Steve Lutz. Some suggested that he had brought professionalism to the village offices and others were pleased that he allowed them a high degree of freedom and discretion to get their jobs done.
- The employees take pride in the communication between city hall and residents (even if it's mostly one way) and pointed often to the newsletter and Web site as pro-active efforts to keep resident tuned in to the activities at city hall. Communication was regularly mentioned as needing improvement. A majority said that two-way communication was inadequate.

Sense of Community

- While the overall perception was positive, the interviewees noted that enhancing the sense of community might be limited because Powell is a somewhat transient community. They acknowledged that there are many successful executives and other professionals living in Powell who frequently receive promotions that in some cases require moving to another city. Mentioning a perceived high rate of turnover, respondents repeatedly noted that many newcomers don't stay very long and as such, the sense of Powell as a cohesive place is somewhat limited.
- It was also noted that Powell could improve as a "teen friendly" community. Some conclusions mentioned included that the schools in some cases are miles away. While many interviewees said the school system is highly regarded and may be one of the reasons families move to Powell, the fact is that one can live in a vast area of southern Delaware County and attend Olentangy Schools. Some interviewees said that Powell would have to deal with teen issues perhaps through organized activities in the future, as the current population of young kids grows older.
- Having more opportunities for a central gathering place, shopping district and community rallying points, as well as more connections between neighborhoods would also enhance the sense of community. In some cases, Powell's neighborhood layouts, while beautiful and peaceful, don't always fully promote linkages. ; it was noted that many residents identify themselves with a particular neighborhood rather than being from Powell.

- There is an impression that many people in the area lack knowledge about what actually constitutes Powell. Many residents of Liberty Township think they live in Powell when they do not. Some believed residents are not fully informed – intentionally or unintentionally – of the true city limits when they purchase their homes, but living in a Powell zip code versus actually living within the city boundaries is a point of much confusion.

This is a key issue with Powell officials since they must constantly explain to non-residents that they cannot assist them. This is also key because in order to continue to deliver services, residents and prospective residents must be made aware of what added value they receive by living inside village boundaries. This added value is a critical component not only to establishing a sense of community, but also for maintaining property values and engaging residents with respect to important city issues.

Traffic

- All of the council members identified traffic as one of their primary concerns and the desire to see the neighborhoods and parks interconnected.

Parks & Recreation

- Almost every council and staff member mentioned the emerging Parks & Recreation Department and its programs as an opportunity to enhance services and help market Powell. The city has set aside considerable acres for parks and a new sense of excitement exists with regard to the new parks and recreation director and the new programs planned and being offered.

Council Role

- Overall, council members see their role in a couple different ways, but very pro-active. Generally they think they should understand the residents' shared values and then shape policy based on those values, admitting that it delays decisions and sometimes progress. Other members leaned toward the "lead and just do it" model that simply assesses information and then renders a decision for the good of the whole. There are undercurrents both from council members and staff of frustration with the tendency to over-analyze and seek too much consensus which can delay actions.

Goals and Objectives of the Strategic Marketing Communications Plan

- Create and market a viable brand image for Powell.
- Build awareness of Powell so as to become known as *the premier* residential community in Central Ohio offering its residents country-like sanctuary, the highest level of services and lifestyle, while at the same time offering the modern and convenient amenities of a large metropolitan area.
- Differentiate and distinguish Powell from other residential, suburban communities in Greater Columbus and Central Ohio to secure its niche in the residential marketplace.
- Reflect Powell's unique brand attributes and the brand promise in a manner that is clear, concise, consistent and creative.
- Nurture and strengthen the sense of community in Powell.
- Enhance Powell's stature with current residents, potential residents, employees, local businesses, businesses seeking to grow or expand, residents of the region at-large and the media.
- Develop and implement a Business and Economic Development Plan to attract complementary businesses to Powell to provide additional amenities and conveniences to the residents and to expand the tax base.
- Establish and grow a base of support for future capital investments in the community.
- Strengthen internal relations and morale among Powell employees and develop employee roles as ambassadors to the residents.
- Position Powell as the foremost residential community in Greater Columbus and Central Ohio.

The Attributes of the Brand

The brand attributes describe the "personality" of a product, a company or a city. Collectively, they define who you are. The brand attributes set the tone to be communicated through collateral materials, advertising, employee relations, and customer services. Both the interviews and the brainstorming session conducted by Griffin Communications were valuable in identifying the brand attributes of Powell. We suggest that these following attributes best describe the *current* "personality" of Powell:

- Service-oriented
- Safe
- Scenic
- Professional, Prosperous, Upscale
- Educated & Pro-learning community
- Peaceful, Serene, Quaint, Friendly
- Well-planned
- Historic
- Vibrant

We have identified additional attributes, however, that will be important to incorporate as part of the Powell brand identity if the community is to successfully market its desired image:

- Progressive
- Strong Sense of Community
- Pedestrian-friendly
- Complementary Small Business
- Town Center full of vitality
- Inter-connected
- Desired

Our goal is to build a brand identity, brand promise and message for Powell that combines the attributes on both lists, thus setting the stage for positioning Powell as the premier residential community in Central Ohio.

The Brand Promise

By putting into writing the Brand Promise of the City of Powell, we lay the foundation for the development of both an internal culture and a promotional campaign that will build a solid, recognizable brand identity and image for the City. The brand promise is an internal statement by which employees and council members can "live the brand." The brand promise must be distinctive and relevant to the "customer."

We recommend Powell's brand promise to be:

The City of Powell is a distinctive community offering residents and small businesses an upscale, community-centered, service-oriented, peaceful lifestyle in the scenic Olentangy River Valley with the amenities of a metropolitan area nearby.

The Vital Messages of the Brand

Below are five suggested messages culled from our interviews, research, branding and our marketing communications expertise. We believe that delivering these messages will enable Powell to establish and reinforce its desired brand promise. These are not intended as ad copy; rather these are messages that will be indirectly conveyed through various communication vehicles as part of the communications plan.

- The City of Powell is a progressive and upscale residential community in a setting that takes advantage of the serene and scenic Olentangy River Valley while offering residents convenience to the amenities of a major metropolitan area.
- The city of Powell is a residential community that provides the highest level of public services, safety and amenities in a historical and peaceful setting.
- Powell is a good investment now and for the future; Powell is a "must see," move-up market community.
- Powell offers a unique "village" environment and perfect mix of old and new for small professional businesses seeking a respite from the cluttered spaces of the typical office development.
- The city of Powell has established a comprehensive plan to take the community into the 21st century and is systematically achieving the goals of the plan.

Logo

For several reasons, we are recommending that Powell revisit its current logo. It is important for Powell to deliver a much larger persona than it has in the past and reflect its brand attributes in order to capitalize on its brand identity. The first and one of the most effective ways to promote your brand is through use of an effective logo. The logo should distinguish Powell and convey an immediate, unmistakable message about the community.

First, there is a technical issue with the current logo. It is in full color with no color scheme that can be identified as Powell's signature colors. If you think of a number of successful companies, products or cities, they typically adopt a definite color scheme that represents the entity and becomes keenly identifiable with it. For example: Upper Arlington's gold and black; Dublin's shamrock green; McDonald's golden arches; Target's red bull's eye to name just a few. Powell should claim its signature color. Color almost always plays a critical part in helping define a brand image. Most entities using a strong brand then develop graphic standards and guidelines that must be followed to insure consistency and the integrity of the brand. The multi colors of the current Powell logo do not allow for this use of color to build your brand identity.

Although the current logo is very well-done and perhaps representative of Powell 10 to 20 years ago, most we interviewed, and we concur, feel the logo does not convey Powell's current brand. The current logo definitely conveys rural farmland; most staff and council members we interviewed indicated Powell is not rural. They used adjectives such as scenic, historic, peaceful, sanctuary-like, up-scale to describe today's Powell. We are recommending a new treatment for the logo that captures the essence of the brand, and allows Powell the technical design ability to begin using a standard 2-color palette that will result in more flexibility across formats and printing cost savings as well.

Tagline

After the logo, the tagline is the most vital element of communicating the brand. It is a succinct message used in promotion and presentation materials to quickly communicate your brand. The tagline normally is found next to the logo. It is NOT an advertising campaign theme. Here are examples of good company taglines:

- "Your total value partner." (Krogers)
- "Well Connected" (Morgan Stanley Dean Witter)
- "Fly Like an Eagle" (USPS)
- "Real World. Real Time." (Cognet Software Management)
- "Just Do It." (Nike)
- "Better Sound Through Research" (Bose)
- "Just slightly Ahead of our Time" (Panasonic)
- "The relentless pursuit of excellence." (Lexus)

The following suggestions for a tagline capitalize on Powell's location along the Olentangy Valley, arguably the most scenic region in Central Ohio. It is a location that people look forward to coming home to. We have focused on the word "home" several times since Powell is primarily a residential community catering to professionals and their families who regard their home as their retreat and most important investment. We

believe there is value in conjuring up the good feelings of being home with loved ones; being home from a long day at work; or even a small business calling Powell home. We believe the tag lines below provide significant creative latitude to utilize in your marketing communications strategies.

Here are our recommendations for taglines:

- Powell. Where getting away means coming home
- Powell. Getting away is coming home
- Powell. Where getting away is coming home
- Powell. Where coming home is getting away
- Come Home to Powell
- You're Always Home in Powell
- You're at Home in Powell
- Be at Home in Powell
- Powell. The Best Place to Call Home
- Powell -- It's the life you've dreamed of
- Powell is where your home is
- Powell *is* home
- Powell -- *the* place to call home
- Pride in Powell

Target Audiences

The marketing communications strategies and tactics recommended in this plan are intended to reach the following Powell stakeholders:

- 1) City of Powell employees
- 2) Powell Residents & Business Owners/Operators
- 3) Potential Powell Residents & Businesses
- 4) Central Ohio community at large
- 5) The Media

Elements of the Plan

To achieve the objectives of the marketing communications plan delineated on page 11, we have recommended seven key elements in this plan and developed correlating strategies and tactics. They are 1) Brand Identity, Promotion and Marketing Communications; 2) Resident Communications (current and prospective); 3) Employee Communications; 4) Economic Development and Business Marketing; 5) Future Planning; 6) Greater Columbus Community at Large; 7) Media Relations. Naturally, there is overlap between these categories in terms of the targeted audience. The following pages provide an outline to guide implementation of building a strong brand identity for the city.

Element #1: Brand Identity, Promotion and Marketing Communications

Objectives:

- To distinguish and differentiate Powell from other residential, suburban communities in Central Ohio.
- Create and market a viable brand image for Powell.
- Build awareness of Powell as the premier residential community.

Strategy:

Incorporate Powell's brand through the creation of new communications vehicles and the consistent and uniform use and promotion of the brand.

Tactics

- Update **Collateral Materials** by incorporating a revised logo and signature color into your basic collateral materials including letterhead, web site, department brochures, fliers, council agenda, newsletter, business cards, service vehicles, patrol cars, etc. It is important to create a uniform and consistent look on all materials that represent Powell. Eventually, items will become automatically recognized as that of Powell's even before it is read or understood. Likewise, it is important that all writing and communications begin to carry the brand message, brand promise and brand attributes of Powell.
- To guarantee the integrity of your brand, it is important to develop a **Graphic Design and Standards Usage Guide** that will assist Powell employees in the use of the logo, tagline and approach to printing, web site, just about anything produced in which the Powell brand may be used.
- Consider a new approach for Powell's **Annual Report**. This in and of itself can be a key marketing tool both inside and outside of Powell. We recommend exploring the possibility of producing the annual report as a 4-page newspaper insert to be carried in one of the suburban newspapers.
- Explore the placement of distinctive uniform boundary or **entrance features** at key locations to convey actual boundaries and reinforce a sense of place for Powell residents. An example may be the large boulders with plaques found at the entrances to Upper Arlington or along the boulevards in Grandview.
- Develop and produce a **new resident information guide** and packet illustrating the advantages of living in Powell, community map of Powell's exact boundaries, services provided, calendar of events, important telephone numbers. The packet could include a cover letter from the city manager and/or mayor and could be funded through sponsorships from local businesses. Even though this would be for new

residents, we recommend sending it to all current residents as well in order to drive home their understanding of the amenities they enjoy and facilitate a better understanding of the level of their city services, etc.

- Explore the possibility of an **advertising campaign** to support an economic development plan that focuses on recruiting businesses to the center of the city. (See Page 24). The ads would focus on encouraging office use, small businesses and retail to call Powell their home.
- **Media Outreach** will be an important part of communicating your brand to all of your identified stakeholders. The strategy must be proactive and one that offers media outlets story placement opportunities outside of the usual coverage of council meetings. Likewise, we will want to approach media outlets about partnering on a number of promotional events and securing a commitment to regular by-lined columns.
- We strongly recommend the development of a **Crisis Communications Plan**. No business, organization or city, unfortunately, is immune from a crisis situation. It will happen sooner or later. The time to prepare is now – not when the crisis happens. This plan should be a step-by-step plan of action that activates as soon as a crisis happens.
- Study the feasibility of a community-sponsored event centered on bicycling called “**Bike Powell**.” The event could be a fundraiser for Parks & Recreation programs or simply a community building event. The event, while centered in Powell, could take advantage of the network of scenic roads around the area and encompass areas around both rivers and even the Columbus Zoo. The end of the day could feature a picnic at the Village Green with food, music and an award ceremony. The event could attract media sponsorship (and coverage) as a major summer event attracting enthusiasts from throughout the region.
- Another variation on “Bike Powell” for current residents could be “**Walk Powell**” in which there is a fast walk race, with different categories for different age levels. This would emphasize the amenity of walking paths that play an important part in the community.
- Host other **community events** that are aligned with the brand and that attract media coverage, such as a series of concerts in the park, arts festival, nature walks, bird watching and fitness and health events.
- We would strongly recommend undertaking **research**, perhaps both a telephone survey and focus groups, to establish a base line of information with current residents/businesses and those outside of Powell, about what people know and understand about Powell, their opinions, beliefs, etc. This will help guide your brand development, your messaging, as well as give you a solid indicator by which to measure the effectiveness of your marketing communications plan.

Element #2: Resident Communications

Objectives:

- Nurture and strengthen the sense of community in Powell.
- Improve the level of 2-way communications between Powell and its residents resulting in a higher level of understanding as to how their tax dollars are wisely planned and used.
- Strengthen the sense of belonging among residents with their neighbors and city hall.
- Establish strong ties between residents and community leaders.
- Establish and grow support for future capital investments in the community.
- Position the city for future objectives.

Strategy:

Provide regular, creative communications to the residents of Powell, with particular emphasis on their participation in the city.

Tactics:

- We recommend that the city initiate the formation of a citywide **civic association** that would assume the role of organizing community events and working with the city manager and council to set priorities for the city. The civic association would raise funds through sponsorships and memberships, develop a schedule, promote and present annual community events. The city would be a partner and perhaps even initiate the events, but the association would assume responsibility for future funding and organizing. Initially, the city would need to begin the process with a plan to completely turn over the organization to a board of directors perhaps in a 2 to 3-year period. This helps create an enhanced sense of community, helps establish the Powell brand and positions the city’s leadership. There are a number of successful models that could be studied to develop the right approach for Powell.
- An annual **customer satisfaction survey** is recommended to gauge and measure the residents’ attitude toward the city and its service delivery, policy decisions, etc. This is a good way to understand the needs and wants of the residents and to evaluate the city’s performance as a whole.
- Institute a “**Leadership Powell**” program that could be held twice a year. Thirty residents could be accepted to participate in each 3-6-month leadership class to learn about Powell – its history, form of government, budget process, capital improvement process, etc. This is an excellent way to capture volunteers and help educate residents and gain support for city policies and expenditures. As part of the class, participants

complete a team project of their choosing that would benefit Powell. Eventually, Leadership Powell could be operated by the Civic Association and/or Chamber.

- Develop a “**Teen Council**” that would be established as a leadership development and volunteer organization for Powell teens. The Teen Council could “shadow” the city council in terms of determining issues and events that they would like to undertake. It is a great way to begin to bring Powell’s teens into the community fabric and develop volunteers, leaders – and future residents – for tomorrow.
- Design and produce a **resident’s guide** to Powell. While aimed at residents new to the community, the kit would contain information for all residents and should initially be provided to all residents. Possible materials in the kit could include: a letter from the Mayor and city council, a guide to Powell neighborhoods, bike paths and uptown, a comprehensive list of community services and important telephone numbers, a specific map or actual street listings indicating the official boundaries of Powell. Perhaps coupons from local businesses to secure sponsor funding for the guide, and a premium item such as a Powell logo refrigerator magnet, a Powell calendar or Powell resident window sticker.
- Design and produce a **2002 Powell calendar** featuring photographs of Powell sights and vintage historical photos. The calendar could be underwritten by selling advertisements to Powell (and area) merchants or by identifying a single sponsor. Again, the calendar would contain pertinent information about Powell, city services, key telephone numbers, etc.
- Create a 2” x 3” Powell automobile **window/bumper sticker** to identify residents. Using the Powell logo or another design, a tasteful Powell window or bumper sticker would lend an air of pride, community and “membership” to residents.
- To convey how Powell values nature and beauty and position the city is to sponsor an **annual tree-planting** program in which the city provides seedlings to children and families.
- To convey Powell’s extraordinary level of service and as a “value added” service would be for the City, once a year in the Fall, to **pick up tree limbs and clippings** in addition to trash.
- Utilize the Olentangy River as a **natural habitat and nature reserve study area** for Olentangy School students. Powell could partner with the schools and other groups to establish the program. The visuals would reflect Powell’s unique scenic attributes and underscore the community’s commitment to education and the environment.
- Explore the possibility of developing a **dual marketing program** with Powell and area businesses that would give Powell residents a 10% discount off purchases. Powell residents would be required to secure their “Powell Pride” card by applying at

city hall so that actual street addresses could be verified. This would work similar to the concept of the Kroger or Big Bear savings card.

- Offer residents the option of receiving the **quarterly newsletter** and other publications on-line on a regular basis to increase two way communications and establish communications continuity. We suspect Powell may have a higher than usual number of residents who use the internet regularly in their lives. We would recommend exploring more ways to engage your residents via your home page.
- Conduct an analysis and **user survey** regarding the Powell Web site. Based on the findings, consider redesigning the site to make it more interactive and creating anticipated updates that will bring visitors back again on a regular basis. Begin to build a database that allows you to proactively e-mail messages to Powell residents.
- Establish a **resident’s section** in the quarterly newsletter with letters from residents, suggestions, ideas and feedback. Or you can tease this section in the newsletter encouraging readers to go to the web site for the full story.
- Establish a **kids corner** in the quarterly newsletter asking children to submit artwork, poems. Again, this might be a great place to get both kids and parents involved in the city by becoming regular users of the web site.
- Establish an Olentangy Schools Powell **Parents Association** focused on Powell residents who attend Olentangy Schools. As a mini PTA, the association could act as a cohesive link between the school system and the City of Powell. The association could advocate on behalf of Powell residents before the school board; coordinate activities to bring Powell residents/Olentangy Schools families closer together. The association could be based on a model in Victorian Village called Midtown Parents and Kids established to foster friendships and organize activities among families living in the near downtown.
- Create an **insert** for the newsletter and add a page to the Web site regarding the plans for the Village Green and parks development plans. Update information regularly so residents have an idea what kind of progress is being made. Provide an opportunity for residents to contribute ideas and respond to plans.
- Using the **public comment process**, develop a 2-5 year capital maintenance schedule and criteria document to clearly communicate the process for addressing Powell’s capital improvement and maintenance needs. Like the comprehensive plan, this would be the City’s guiding document for undertaking capital improvements, but not the “last word.”
- Create and post or distribute a schedule of **routine maintenance** (i.e. a City Update) to keep residents apprised of monthly or even weekly activities of the service department.

- Organize an "Images of Powell" photography contest for adults and for children. Hold an exhibit of entries at a "gallery night" held on the Village Green. Entries could be featured in the Powell calendar or website.
- Create an annual (or more frequent) "Community Walk" encouraging residents and families to walk or bicycle to an event such as a cookout, village hall presentation or holiday hop to shops in the downtown.

Element #3: Employee Relations

Objectives:

- Position employees as Powell ambassadors.
- Position employees as stakeholders in Powell's future.
- Empower employees in an effort to maintain and strengthen delivery of services and develop stronger working relationships with fellow staff members and community residents.

Strategy:

Strengthen internal communications among and to Powell Employees.

Tactics:

- Design and conduct an **employee survey** to measure job satisfaction, clearly define individual and collective goals, and seek input on how employees can assist in achieving Powell's goals.
- Produce a monthly **employee update** either electronically or via an internal newsletter to keep employees updated on internal activities and procedures.
- Plan an **employee retreat** to take place off-site, if possible, for planning and relationship building. The retreat can offer all employees the opportunity to participate in creating a plan by which the staff can set goals and determine steps and projects to be undertaken to accomplish those goals. Topics at the retreat would include: improved internal communications, quality service delivery, customer (resident) relations, streamlined internal processes and staff motivation and satisfaction.
- Organize **quarterly brown bag lunches** for each department with the City Manager. This is an opportunity, in a casual setting, for employees to chat with the City Manager about issues, ideas, etc. they have and begin a two-way dialogue. It's also an opportunity for the city manager to update them on news, suggestions, issues, etc.
- In an effort to familiarize residents with employees, include individual **employee profiles** in the quarterly newsletter with job description, personal information, photograph and a brief interview.
- Design and produce an **employee polo shirt** or baseball cap with the Powell logo and encourage staff to wear when operating out in the community.

- Establish a mechanism to highlight **individual employee achievements** and share among staff and residents. Consider achievements to be resident compliments and even employee ideas to provide a service in a better way.
- If not already in place, we would recommend instituting an **employee evaluation program** that includes a self evaluation and goal setting to give employees more of a buy-in into helping the city achieve its goals as well as their personal professional development goals. As well, from an employer standpoint, this is an important policy to have in place.

Element #4: Economic Development and Business Marketing

Objectives:

- Implement an Economic Development Plan for the community that focuses on attracting new businesses.
- Nurture relationships with existing retailers and shop owners in Powell to create a single, united effort to market Powell's shopping opportunities and attract interest from potential retailers.
- Communicate to business owners and commercial real estate professionals that Powell is "open for business" although on a smaller, more community focused scale than traditional suburban communities.
- Organize a group of stakeholders charged with developing the Economic Development Plan and then implementing the plan that is designed to market Powell.

Strategy:

Partner with existing businesses, chamber and community leaders to develop specific goals and opportunities, and to market Powell to desired businesses by conveying it's attributes and advantages to targeted tenants, attract private investment and possibly public funding.

Tactics:

- Create a **business attraction/development and redevelopment task force** charged with researching, producing and implementing an Economic Development Plan for Powell. The plan would study the need, the economic and revenue impact, desired businesses, retail and commercial real estate opportunities and a comprehensive marketing initiative to recruit businesses to Powell. Members of the task force would include the Director of Development, one or two members of council, chamber officials and several residents (preferably with retail/development expertise).
- Create a **joint group** comprised of downtown business association members, chamber of commerce members and city leaders to develop and implement a **marketing plan for the four corners business district**.
- Explore the possibility of creating a position, part time or full time, of an **economic development officer** who would develop and implement strategies

for bringing businesses to Powell. Perhaps the City and the Chamber could jointly fund this position.

- To help begin the task force's work, assemble a list of attributes, both existing and desired, that make the City of Powell an ideal location to site a retail or small professional business. Interview existing business owners to determine their reasons for establishing, staying or even leaving/rejecting the Powell location. Produce a "State of Business in Powell" report for use by the task force.
- Create and distribute a guide possibly entitled "Doing Business in Powell" featuring background information about the community, income levels and other demographics, information about commercial real estate opportunities, tax incentives, etc.
- Establish a **Home-based Business Roundtable** offering membership to residents who work from their homes. This networking group would meet on a regular basis sharing information, ideas and camaraderie.
- Study and pursue **government and public official relationships** at the state level to learn about grant and other available opportunities to access public funds for capital improvements for cities. Explore Tax Increment Financing (TIF) initiatives other communities have utilized to augment economic development planning.

Element #5: "Planning for the Future"

Objectives:

- Establish and grow a base of support for future capital investments in the community.
- Effectively and clearly demonstrate that city officials allocate resources to provide the highest level of services to residents.
- Demonstrate to residents that Powell's fiscal operations are sound and tax dollars are spent prudently.

Strategy:

Proactively promote a better understanding of City goals and values by communicating them to key audiences in a manner that is consistent and engaging in order to create a greater acceptance of and support for future policy decisions.

Tactics:

- Produce a **comprehensive plan brochure** that explains the goals of Powell's comprehensive plan succinctly and briefly so that residents have a clear understanding of Powell's future plans.
- Using the public comment process, **revise the City's Comprehensive Plan** to inform residents and businesses of the progress made to date, receive their input, and produce an update or addendum to the plan.

- Create a **study committee** to examine comprehensive plan implementation efforts in other communities similar to Powell. The committee may study communities outside of central Ohio and may even explore historical efforts such as turn of the century and post war projects in other cities that pursued planned communities. Examples may include Country Club Plaza in Kansas City and commuter rail communities outside of Chicago.
- Create and publish an **annual or bi-annual report** to the community highlighting service delivery in Powell, fiscal management and detailing efforts to maximize tax dollars.
- Circulate Powell's **plans for capital investments** among the media, county and state elected officials and targeted new business prospects to generate interest in Powell's plan, attract private investment to complement the comprehensive plan and perhaps even locate public funding opportunities.

Element #6: Greater Columbus Community at Large

Objectives:

- Position Powell among the leading residential communities in Ohio.
- Identify opportunities for presenting the Powell brand promise to large audiences in central Ohio and communicate the uniqueness Powell.

Strategy:

Develop creative opportunities to convey the Powell brand and designated messages to targeted audiences that help to shape opinions in Central Ohio and reach targeted audiences.

Tactics:

- Design and produce a full color **life-style piece** ("Powell: Home in the Olentangy River Valley") to serve as a marketing tool. Include photographs of scenic vistas, neighborhoods, bike paths uptown and historical black and white vintage Powell scenes. The copy would include a brief history of Powell and a description of the features (scenic, semi-isolated, attractively planned, convenient location) that has made Powell a destination for professionals seeking to "come home to Powell." The piece should also make mention of the plans for the future i.e. Village Green.
- Plan and host a breakfast **seminar for real estate agents** and brokers operating in Powell, Liberty Township and southern Delaware County. Plan a presentation about the City of Powell, its amenities and other selling points with a strong emphasis on what neighborhoods and boundaries actually constitute Powell.
- Design, produce and distribute a **real estate professional's guide** to Powell highlighting attributes, service delivery, statistical data, boundaries and neighborhood profiles.
- Explore the possibility of producing and launching a "Powell is Home" marketing effort to publicize Powell's recently reported 97% rate of home ownership, the highest in Greater Columbus. The effort would target real

estate agents, relocation specialists, corporate recruiting and human resource professionals and even Columbus marketing officials working to attract businesses to Central Ohio.

- Pursue **media coverage** of community events that convey Powell's scenic vistas, i.e. weather broadcasts live from a concert in the park, etc.

Element #7: Media Relations

Objectives:

- Provide local and Columbus media with a reliable source of accurate and consistent information to respond to inquiries and newsworthy events.
- Create media opportunities that will share the "Powell experience" with Columbus and other communities in an effort to attract small businesses interested in serving upscale populations and potential residents.
- Proactively offer reporters an opportunity to discover Powell, its residents, attractions and plans for the future.
- Provide members of the media access to the activities in Powell.

Strategy

To work cooperatively with the media to communicate information on Powell and to position the City by assessing the status of current relationships and coverage, by developing proactive methods to address the media, by developing vehicles through which to communicate and by securing media placements that reflect positively on Powell.

Tactics:

- Conduct an **analysis of media coverage** of Powell over the past 10-15 years in an effort to determine what effect the media coverage has had on internal and external impressions of Powell. Also examine media coverage of other communities and, when possible, study other communities' approach to media relations.
- Designate a **spokesperson** to speak on behalf of Powell in response to any media inquiry. This person should undergo a spokesperson training exercise and become familiar with reporters assigned to cover Powell. We recommend media training for Department heads as well.
- Consider conducting **regular meetings** with opinion leaders including chamber leaders, business executives and media representatives to learn what opinion leaders are thinking about Powell. These informal meetings can be conversations about Powell in general, issues affecting southern Delaware County, Powell's unique contribution to the fabric of the greater metropolitan area, the City's approach to service delivery and capital improvement funding, etc.
- Establish a **media desk** or media center through which all media-related activities are coordinated

- Produce a **media calendar** with feature story ideas to be pitched each month to neighborhood/community newspapers. Each month an aspect about life in Powell would be highlighted and a press kit created for presentation to the papers.
- Explore opportunities to **sponsor spots** on Columbus public radio stations in that promote 15 - 30 second announcements about events in Powell or mini "advertisements" for Powell.
- Explore the ability to produce a **regular column** for the suburban newspapers ("Powell Notes") highlighting local events, historical anecdotes and even a profile of a resident with an unusual or unique contribution or lifestyle.

Next Steps

Once the plan is finalized, Griffin Communications will work to apply the plan to a 12 to 18 month timeline based on your prioritization of strategies. As well, we will develop a budget for your review with suggestions for sponsorships and in-kind donations.

To finalize the plan, we recommend the immediate next steps:

- Distribution of the plan to the city's communications planning team.
- Review of the plan with the city's communications planning team during another planning session to reach a consensus on the direction of the plan and prioritize the strategies.
- Finalize plan.
- Review budget estimates and determine budget for the first 12-months of implementation.