Position Description:

Economic Development Intern

Reports to: Economic Development Specialist

Effective: May-August 2013

About Downtown Roanoke, Inc.

Since 1960, Downtown Roanoke Incorporated (DRI) has been hard at work helping the city continue to progress and grow as a thriving center for industry, education, arts and culture, and recreation. DRI is a private sector, not-for-profit downtown development organization dedicated to making the downtown area a unique and successful place to work, live, invest, and play. DRI provides leadership and support to create a common desire to preserve the character of the past while pursuing a future filled with innovative opportunities and will help downtown continue to grow as the hotspot of the region. DRI works in partnership with property owners, businesses, merchants, other non-profits, and the government to identify needs, develop strategies, shape public policy, and implement programs to strengthen the economic vitality of downtown and its role within the region as the urban center of western Virginia.

Position Description

The Economic Development Internship is structured to provide the intern with substantial—and transferrable—skills and experience to progress professionally and personally. The intern will be involved in priority initiatives and gain experience working with a diverse set of stakeholders across multiple sectors (city government, public-private partnerships, private business and community organizations). S/he will also develop important skills and experience as s/he works on the planning, development, and implementation of projects identified in DRI’s FY2014 Economic and Community Development/Placemaking and Destination Marketing Plans.

The Economic Development Intern will also gain professional and personal experience while engaging in the community at large. S/he will attend a few of DRI’s events—such as Party in the Park and Movies at the Tower—as well as professional networking events and informal social opportunities taking place in Downtown Roanoke. The goal is for the intern to gain a holistic and authentic experience working for and serving in a diverse community.

The Economic Development Internship is ideal for undergraduate and graduate students (currently enrolled or recently graduated) seeking careers in city planning/management, policy & politics, economic & community development, urban development or real estate. The program is designed for
ambitious individuals seeking not only to build a strong resume, but also to make an impact on the community as s/he further develops important skills critical to a successful career.

Scope of Work

The Economic Development Intern will work with the Economic Development Specialist to conduct research, marketing, and correspondence with diverse stakeholders in support of DRI’s business retention and recruitment efforts, infill development and new construction program, and the City of Roanoke’s new Downtown Plan. The intern is also encouraged to design his/her own project to complete that will contribute to both DRI’s efforts and the intern’s academic and/or professional development.

Some of the specific initiatives in which the Economic Development Intern may be involved include:

- Significant restructuring of Enterprise Zone One A incentives in order to promote infill development and new construction on vacant and/or underused lots in priority areas in Downtown Roanoke;

- Survey to determine the regional distribution of business activities originating from financial, insurance, legal, and professional business service firms (FIRE-LPB) concentrated in Downtown Roanoke;

- The design and development of a new database and metric system to assess economic activity and agglomeration in the financial, insurance, legal, and professional business service industries concentrated in Downtown Roanoke;

- Establishing priority action areas for the City of Roanoke’s new Downtown Plan, as well as conducting research on potential projects, programs, or activities for those areas.

Workplace Experience

- Accompany Economic Development Specialist in meetings, activities, and programs related to DRI’s economic development initiatives;

- Attend Economic Development Committee and sub-committee meetings;

- Accompany Economic Development Specialist in retail/restaurant business visitations.

Research and Data Compilation

- Update database of properties and property owners within the Special Assessment District;

- Compile case studies on local economic development incentive programs in cities with comparable urban redevelopment initiatives;

- Organize/map survey data to reflect the regional distribution of business activities originating from Downtown Roanoke FIRE-LPB firms.
Consulting and Support

- Assist Economic Development Specialist in the implementation of the Downtown Roanoke Placemaking and Destination Marketing Plan
- Assist Economic Development Specialist in the identification of priority corridors for activation, (re)development, and new programming.
- Consult on concepts, proposals, and plans related to the development of the City of Roanoke’s new Downtown Plan.

Qualifications and Personal Attributes

Eligibility for DRI’s Economic Development Internship Program is limited to:

- Undergraduate students currently enrolled or recently graduated (Winter 2012/Spring 2013) from an accredited, 4-year undergraduate institution and major/concentration in Economics, Business Administration, Political Science, Geography, Planning/Urban Studies, or related field.
- Graduate students currently enrolled or recently graduated (Winter 2012/Spring 2013) from an accredited graduate degree program in Economics, Planning, Public Policy/Administration, Business Administration/Management, Geography, or related field.

The ideal candidate will:

- Have strong interests in cities and community development, urban development, real estate, business, public policy or economics.
- Have strong interpersonal and written communication skills, time competency and organization skills, and a drive to practice and further develop skills learned in the classroom and/or through experience;
- Be an ambitious self-starter seeking to use the opportunity to develop both personally and professionally, gain new perspectives and experiences, and make a lasting impact on the community in which s/he is serving.

How to Apply:

To be considered for the position, please send a cover letter or resume to priceg@downtownroanoke.org.