

## PSJRA Presents “What Our City Can Look Like”

The PSJRA has worked with Land Design Innovations (LDI) over the past year and a half to develop two documents: (1) the redevelopment plan revision and (2) the urban strategies and design guidelines for the redevelopment areas. The culmination of their work on the redevelopment plan revision rests currently with the City Commissioners, awaiting their approval and adoption. This formal adoption must occur to enable the PSJRA to begin implementing newly identified projects and development efforts in the plan for both the downtown area and the expanded boundary (North Port St. Joe). Any and all projects funded through the PSJRA must link to the adopted plan. For example, the new plan includes community celebrations. The 1990 plan did not. Until this plan revision is adopted, we can neither help with nor plan celebrations or festivals. Likewise, until the plan is adopted, no implementation can occur in the newly added North Port. St. Joe community.

When small-city redevelopment expert Bob Gibbs visited us in February of 2006, he noted, “A tidal wave of change is coming; we must manage the change.” He observed that existing signage and features at the edges of the business district do not “act as a beacon for shopper or sight-seers,” and “Port St. Joe currently has neither a distinctive identity nor a visual impact to create a particular interest in entering the business district.” He recommended we create an image that will attract and entice visitors to stop and shop, and our theme should embrace the historic flavor of the area. The “branding” should include the sense of an “authentic coastal town” and a “quaint” historic area. Importantly, he noted, “Every feature of the business districts needs to look like somebody cares.”

On Monday, August 27, LDI will present their interpretation of the community’s vision for the business districts. This presentation will be held at the Senior Citizens’ Center at 120 Library Drive. It will begin at 5 PM, and dinner will be provided. LDI will introduce proposed styles for specific areas in town, based on community preferences. We will discuss commercial layouts (lots, streets, open spaces, sidewalks and parking), circulation (traffic flow, emergency access and connectivity), streetscape (sidewalks, parkways, street trees, street lighting), utilities (retention ponds, fences, air condition units) site design (location and orientation of buildings, yards), architectural standards (colors, design) and safety (crime prevention through environmental design).

LDI will also propose the use of corridor-specific design guidelines and themes for commercial and neighborhood thoroughfares (Reid Avenue, Williams Avenue, the 98 corridor, 1<sup>st</sup> and Marina Drive). They have interwoven the information provided by WIM Associates for North Port St. Joe corridors (MLK and Avenue A) into this document.

Comments and/or revisions that reflect community consensus from this workshop will be included in the final document. So this is important...we hope you can attend!

The final document will be presented to the City Commission for review and comment at a date to be determined. As part of this presentation, LDI will review the planning process and public participation process that was utilized to determine the Design Guidelines Report recommendations. Ultimately, this document will be codified by the City prior to implementation.

Don’t forget one additional exciting opportunity—come and participate with our panel of redevelopment agency experts—coming here from throughout the state—to answer your questions about the PSJRA on Thursday, August 30, 5 PM, at the City Commission Chambers. Instead of creating any misconceptions about how we think things “should be,” let’s ask our questions and find out how they really are.

See you there!