

Ready...Set...Go

2007 was dedicated to understanding the direction the public wanted redevelopment to take to create the accompanying plans. The PSJRA hosted 14 workshops, attended by over 400 stakeholders—some from as far as neighboring states and as near as across the street. We provided dinners to entice participation. We mailed notices, published advertisements in the Star News, posted flyers, and sent out email blasts. We created an Advisory Committee as yet another means through which every stakeholder could participate in redevelopment policy and implementation. From that effort, we revised our redevelopment plan (the community goals to which expenditures must link) and created design guidelines (the “look” of our business district).

Board development has been a priority to ensure the professional expertise required to move ahead effectively and efficiently is represented. Currently interior design, landscape architecture, journalism and media, public relations, and development are represented. We are planning to add finance and architectural design with two new board members. We are fortunate to have the Design Review Committee of exceptional volunteers (architects and interior designers) to provide guidance to businesses who take advantage of our façade grant program.

To date, the Dr. Joe Memorial Parking Lot is substantially complete, adding 35 parking spaces in the center of downtown. We will add a deck, seating, bridges and the monument to Dr. Joe, making this an ideal place for small gatherings throughout the year. We have also overhauled the landscaping on Reid Avenue for lower maintenance, greater safety, reduced water usage and much-welcome shade to keep shoppers comfortable on those warm summer days.

Next year, implementation will be in full swing. Williams Avenue, in two phases, will have sidewalks, landscaping, and improved drainage. The bulk of the cost for phase I is through the USDA Rural Communities Grant, and USDA has encouraged us to apply for the same grant for the phase II completion.

Through a partnership with Waterfronts and a committed, talented Farmers’ Market Committee, the PSJRA is providing funding and support to make the SaltAir Farmers’ Market concept a reality. The “test” market during Christmas on the Coast was a smashing success. Nearly 50 surveys were returned with comments such as “I have been waiting for this for a long time,” “I love to shop farmers’ markets,” and “Good stuff.” You told us you “Can’t wait till April” and “It is apparent it will help downtown. It is Saturday, and there are cars on the street and people in the stores.” Thanks for all the support; there will be glitches (and indeed we have found and solved a couple and apologize yet again for any inconvenience to anyone). The SaltAir Market will provide a variety of benefits to our community.

Watch for the transformation of the downtown business district over the next few months; the façade grant program will provide immediate and significant benefits to business. The PSJRA has twice brought retail expert Rick Segal to help our retailers succeed. We are also working with our business development consultant, Ed Nelson, to create incentive packages and programs to help expand and extend opportunities for our downtown business. We support and encourage the reorganization of the Downtown Merchants’ Association and look to that group for ongoing direction. We continue to thank the City for their influence, support and participation in our activities.

I would like to offer a personal thanks too all of you who provide such kind and welcome encouragement and inspiration to me daily. On behalf of the PSJRA, we wish each of you a Holiday Season filled with love and joy as well as a prosperous and healthy New Year.