

Preparing for Williams Avenue Construction

On July 7, the improvements on Williams Avenue will begin. The PSJRA is looking forward to working with GAC, the contractor awarded the bid to complete this project. This project will add sidewalks the length of Williams, and thus improving the safety for pedestrians. In addition, the improved grading and additional storm-water drains will manage the flooding after rain events. Landscaping will add both comfort and beauty. We continue to express our gratitude to USDA Rural Business for contributing \$100,000 in response to the grant written by the PSJRA. Thanks, again, to Preble-Rish for their commendable assistance; Bill Kennedy, Gena Johnson, and Clay Smallwood have remained on top of the process.

We are preparing information for the businesses on Williams Avenue to help us all prepare for disruption. Yes, we will likely be torn up for about 40 days (and nights). These details will be worked out between the PSJRA, GAC, and Preble-Rish to provide businesses with the best possible scenario. The Dr. Joe Memorial Parking Lot will remain available for parking, and the pedestrian bridges have been completed, making it convenient to park and walk across the bridges to any business. We will post flyers to outline additional temporary parking and access options. In this way, you can let your employees and customers know what to expect during the construction.

We apologize ahead of time for any disruption, but it will be a tremendous improvement upon completion. We will look forward to a grand opening celebration of both the Dr. Joe Memorial and Williams Avenue in mid August!

Speaking of grants and road improvements, we have applied to FDOT for a significant grant to begin the improvements to US 98 between First and Fifth. This phase will repair and replace sidewalks as needed, install new streetlights, benches, litter receptacles and planters. We will keep our fingers crossed that this grant request is approved. Thanks to all who have provided letters of support and to the City for their support of this project.

And speaking of street furniture—several of you have asked for additional benches on Reid, and they will be delivered to Public Works sometime this week and installed within a couple of weeks.

Let me just take a moment to thank all of you who continue to call, drop by or stop me on the street to let me know what you are looking for from the redevelopment agency. We appreciate it!