

## **Downtown Anderson: 2008 Year in Review**

The year 2008 was full of both many challenges and triumphs for Downtown Anderson. However, we have so much to be proud, encouraged, and excited about, considering both projects completed and developments to come. Optimism abounds when we see the resiliency and innovation of our Downtown merchants, and we are looking forward to see the accomplishments 2009 brings.

### **Public Investment**

There were numerous public investments made in Downtown during 2008, and each were devoted to the continued revitalization set forth in the **Master Plan**.

Five of the six **streetscapes** were completed, with E. Benson Street set to be finished at the end of February. This will close out a three million dollar project, adding charm and beauty to our Downtown streets.

The majority of the **parking garage** was completed in 2008, with the opening scheduled for February 2009. The garage's retail space will be ready by the end of March. The parking garage has been an eight million dollar project, a needed addition as Downtown continues to grow.

The **Municipal Business Center**, which opened in August, consolidated several City of Anderson departments into one building. This was a five million dollar project; with the hopes this project will be the catalyst for future investment on S. Main St,

The City also awarded grants to building owners in Downtown for improvements of structural facades. This year, a total of \$25,000 in **facade grant** money was distributed for such improvements.

The total public investment for Downtown revitalization came to over **\$16 million dollars**.

### **Private Investment**

Downtown had **\$1.9 million dollars in building permits** for 2008. There are many wonderful businesses that opened their doors in 2008, and still others that are to open early in 2009.

#### **Businesses that opened in 2008 include:**

Alterations and Stitches  
Anderson Shoe Repair  
Burgundy Blues Club  
Eddie's Vac Shop  
Family Dollar  
Gallery 3\*1\*3

Halfway to Habana 2  
Ike's Shoe Shine  
Kress Events  
Metropolis Pizza  
Midtown Collectibles  
The Plaza Room  
Southern Elegance  
The Victoria Tea Room

**Businesses that are set to open early in 2009 include:**

Big Daddy Barbeque  
The Fox English Pub  
Jared Lloyd Hair Studio  
Lara's Tires  
The Kitchen Emporium Beer and Wine Shop  
Lilia Day Spa  
Sullivan's Café  
SYS Constructors

**More Good News**

In 2008, the City Council approved a concept of a **hotel, restaurant, and meeting space** for the **Belk Site**. Local businesses and industries responded very positively to the idea, estimating that they would use a total of 1,600 room nights annually. Depending on economic conditions, construction at the Belk Site could begin within 12-18 months.

During the process of streetscape, it was decided to preserve the **trolley tracks and brick pavers** between on North Main Street between Earle and Orr Streets. The City plans to commemorate the location with a marker in 2009.

The City Council established and appointed the **Downtown Development Commission** (DDC) to support in the revitalization efforts. The DDC members' responsibilities include assisting in marketing Downtown, attracting new businesses, and working collaboratively with Downtown stakeholders.

The City of Anderson transitioned the Downtown **beautification department** from contracted work to one full time and one part time permanent position. These two individuals are dedicated solely to the beautification of Downtown.

Downtown Development Director Arlene Young was awarded a **grant from the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor**. This planning grant was inspired by the documentary film *Trading Church Street*, which chronicles African American citizens who lived and worked there. This grant will be used to select an artist based on their concept of public art that will adequately honor Church Street.

The Main Street Program's Economic Restructuring Committee produced the **marketing tool entitled *Connections***, which they distribute by booklet, CD-Rom, and website, all with the same content. The CD version also includes **Claritas demographic information**, which is used to persuade potential businesses that our Downtown is the right market for them.

Various **"Shop Downtown" marketing strategies** were employed during 2008. Along with a segment on ECTV 14, a marketing video was also available on both Downtown and the City's websites. There were several cooperative ads and inserts featured in the *Anderson Independent-Mail* encouraging citizens to rediscover Downtown. The new magazine *Everything Anderson* has also committed to showcasing Downtown in 2009 with a regular "Downtown Diva" feature. An updated Downtown Visitors guide is in the works, and should be printed by early 2009.

### **2009 Priorities**

Due to budget cuts and TIF dollars that are already pre-committed for the next few years, there will be no new *major* Downtown projects in 2009. Instead, the focus will primarily be on those elements that make Downtown shine, such as beautification and maintenance of the new infrastructure.

The **Downtown parking dynamics** will soon be altered, due to the opening of the added spaces of the parking garage and from many Anderson County offices moving to a new location.

**Wayfinding signage** in Downtown is a Master Plan priority. The implementation of the plan will begin with a free standing kiosk near the John Street parking lot and a wall mounted kiosk at the new parking garage.

**Marketing** efforts will continue through an updated Downtown Visitors Guide to be printed in early 2009 and through additional "Shop Downtown" advertisements in local publications.

Initial negotiations have begun with a Downtown property owner about the creation of **greenspace**. Due to budget cuts, funds are a concern at this time.

The year 2009 will also bring changes to the **Downtown Security Staff**. Recently, the Security Staff has grown to four officers, who will serve as security for court, City Hall, and the Municipal Business Center. As well as providing security, their duties will include event security, parking enforcement, and construction staging. Night Patrol will continue to patrol Downtown in the evenings for now.

The Downtown Department conducted a **Loading Zones** survey to assess the merchants' needs of additional loading zone spaces. Per the results of the survey, there are now five areas that are strictly dedicated as loading zones. These loading areas are located on Federal, Sharpe, W. Earle Streets and two in the E. St. Church parking lot. In the interest

of preserving as many parking spaces as possible, there are now three areas devoted as loading zones from 5:00AM to 10:00AM and from 3:00PM to 5:00PM. At all other times, these spaces will be used for parking. These three timed loading zones are located on W. Calhoun, E. Earle and W. Church Street.

The Downtown merchants are in the process of developing a proposal for the Soiree Board. The proposal will consist of ideas for restructuring fees relative to **Downtown businesses' participation in Soiree.**