

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words – Design Guidelines Coming for Your Review

On **Monday evening, June 18**, the PSJRA will host an important workshop for the entire redevelopment area to provide you with the opportunity to tell us **what you want your city to look like**. Land Design Innovations (LDI) and WIM Associates will be on board to show conceptual drawings of building facades, streetscapes and related components for your comment and your vote. Your input will be interwoven in the a document, “Urban Development and Design Guidelines,” for the redevelopment area of Port St. Joe. This document will provide examples of site design, building orientation, commercial lot layout, parking, access and circulation and preferred development styles. It will also address utilities (retention ponds, fences and walls) and safety (crime prevention through environmental design). Please join us at **5 PM at the Gulf County Senior Citizens’ & Community Center**. We will even throw dinner in to make your evening complete!

Just why are we spending time and dollars on design guidelines? The basic premise (and reality) is that quality design (the appearance of our city) will result in quality development (redevelopment). Design standards will also protect the community’s investment to date. When the aesthetic appearance of a community is improved, the sense of pride of residents, owners and merchants is strengthened. And business increases!

In August, the attendees of the PSJRA/LDI workshop voted on their preferred architectural styles, providing the foundation for the design guildelines:

- Florida Cracker Style: a variant of the Southern National Style that emphasizes deeper, often added-on porches and lower pitched roofs, with large roof overhangs.
- Key West Style: a variant form of Folk Victorian style that emphasizes symmetrical front facades, full-width porches and “gingerbread” wood trim and accessories.
- Craftsman Style: a simple style, derived from the English Arts and Crafts movement, includes overhanging eaves, wide porches and wood frame or stone construction. Urban bungalows with porches and even apartment complexes were built in this style in San Francisco and usually include some rustic naturalistic exterior details.

In addition, maintaining the appearance of our commercial corridors will help Port St. Joe’s historic business districts remain competitive in the regional market. In the absence of standards to ensure attractive development/redevelopment, other areas in the region (or even within our city) may position themselves with a more competitive advantage to attract residents and businesses away from our historic business districts.

There are those who are wary of being “told” what they “have to do” with their property. According to LDI, the purpose and intent of design guidelines is to “**guide** development toward creating a cohesive pattern of buildings and streetscapes that balance the pedestrian and traffic needs of residents. The design standards are intended to be flexible and **encourage** design diversity and variation.” Please pay particular attention to the words “guide” and “encourage.” The preservation of characteristic details and historic fabric of an area is essential to successful development, redevelopment or rehabilitation.

While much of the emphasis on design guidelines and urban development is placed on the commercial districts, “it also encourages protection of residential and environmental interests from the impacts of nonresidential development. The integration of flowing traffic circulation and pedestrian accessibility is one primary concern for new development and

redevelopment.” Special attention is placed on the creation of a quality, safe and functional environment for the entire redevelopment area.

In other news, the final approval of the Redevelopment Plan Revision is coming up very soon. “Official” notice for that meeting is forthcoming. Should you need additional information, please feel free to contact Gail Alsobrook at our office (second floor of City Hall), or Gail@CelebratePortSaintJoe.com or 850-229-6899.