

## Quitman Next Steps Memo:

### Three Months to Six Months Objectives:

- Work with the Clarke County Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, and the Quitman School District to develop a branding and marketing campaign including a logo and moniker that unifies the community. **Branding for a City is the most complex and challenging issue any city will ever face. Our effort is starting with those points that are indicative of our city. We know we are a Recreational Center having two beautiful lakes, and one pristine river. We also boast of being a "Mill Town with Charm", and One Gig Fiber allowing anyone to live here and work for a company over 1,000 miles away. Cultural attractions are only a hop, skip, and jump to such attractions as the Riley Center. We started this project by giving our School's Art Department, Chamber, and the Quitman Auxiliary this information and the opportunity to develop a branding campaign. Winner will receive \$100.00.**
- Develop the marketing and branding campaign described above to create logos to be included on signage. **Logo for Web Site and marketing campaign in works.**
- Create a timeline for the adoption of a Complete Streets policy within three to six months. **Moving to six months to one year. Feasibility study will require local participation, due to lack of any federal or state funding being available.**
- As part of the Complete Streets policy development, consider where bicycle lanes could be added to offer connections to nearby residential neighborhoods and to Archusa Creek Water Park. **Moving to six months to one year.**
- Paint / repaint crosswalks in the town center. **Design and estimates in works with Engineer and M.D.O.T.**
- Create a committee of Quitman residents with mobility issues to demonstrate challenging pedestrian infrastructure and offer recommendations for improvement. **Moving to one year and longer to view the feasibility study on bicycle lanes and need for sidewalks.**
- Assess the condition of existing vacant properties and storefronts in the town center. **Completed**
- Map ownership of existing building stock in the town center. **Completed**
- Create a list or database containing basic information about each including the property owner, condition of structure, tax status, and any other pertinent information. **Completed**
- Work with a web developer to retool and update the city's website while increasing its technical capabilities. This will enable it to become a portal of information on the community for residents and visitors alike. For example, include the latest news and events, maps and lists of town center businesses as well as rotating business profiles to highlight the community assets. **In works now, to be completed within the next three months.**
- Reach out to local colleges or other organizations to provide training to local businesses on how to market themselves using the Internet and social media. **Moved to three months to six months due to time constraints.**

- Reach out to potential affordable housing partners - developers, churches and other parties -- to assess interest in creating affordable housing in or connected to the town center. **Working with Developer in conjunction with the Mississippi Economic Redevelopment Act for Brownfield Sites. This is a Grant Process that has a definite timetable.**
- Begin a program to target blighted housing causing a negative impact to neighborhoods and to the town center. **Ongoing efforts successful having completed clean-up or demolition of ten properties.**
- Research potential local, state, and federal funding mechanisms for affordable housing. Appendix A includes USDA and other potential resources for funding. **Currently building four homes with funding through H.U.D., but USDA has not received funding at this time for any other construction.**
- Convene a committee of seniors to understand their housing needs and existing mobility issues in the community. **Meeting with East Central Planning & Development Senior Services Division to establish the core program.**
- Conduct a visioning and planning process for the future of the Bazor Lumber Yard site that includes the entire community. **Plan has been developed, but remains flexible. Meeting with County, School, Churches, and Civic Leaders to see what activities and what facilities we will be needing that are in the Quitman School**
- Begin conversations with potential developers of the sites to design and implement the community's vision. **First meeting is next week (April 19th, 2017).**

### **Medium- and Long-term Actions (6 months to 12 months)**

- Adopt the logo and moniker and encourage all public sector agencies as well as private sector businesses and organizations to utilize it in their letterhead, websites, social media, and signage as appropriate.
- Begin discussions with Clarke County and Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) to utilize right of way owned by these agencies to place monuments and markers where they will be visible by motorists.
- Incorporate Complete Streets policy into roadway and intersection redesigns as they occur.
- Begin repairing sidewalks and design them to be Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant. **A.D.A. act creates financial challenges that are difficult to overcome without funding. We have improved 400 feet of sidewalk in or near our downtown corridor.**
- Identify suitable locations for outdoor entertainment spaces and related amenities in the town center such as benches and trash receptacles.

- Clean up, paint, and repair vacant storefronts to make them attractive to visitors even though no activity may be occurring inside. **Mississippi Power has given \$8,000 for our Facade Improvement Program. Five storefronts have been completed with two more in the works.**
- Create a plan for public art in the town center that involves the community, both as participants in the process and as artists. As noted above, this may include artwork in vacant storefronts and second story windows, murals on otherwise blank walls, and other improvements. **Murals completed, with additional artwork planned to be completed within the next six months.**
- In conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce and other community partners, create a plan for marketing the town center and the availability of broadband Internet access there to attract new high tech industries to the town center.
- Assess the viability of redeveloping the existing Sportsplex facility as a site for affordable housing.
- Plan a grid of walkable and bikeable street connectivity within the site, to the center, as well as to the adjacent neighborhoods and recreational activities. **Part of the Feasibility Study planned for this time frame.**
- Be diligent in selecting businesses and amenities for this property that are complementary to the town's long-term vision.

### **Long Term Actions (12 Months and Beyond)**

- Ensure that the branding and marketing campaign continues to represent the community and its amenities by updating it from time to time.
- Place monuments and markers along Highway 45 as well as other roadways leading into town.
- Ensure that this signage, once placed, has attractive landscaping that receives ongoing maintenance.
- Transform vacant properties into outdoor entertainment spaces that bring people from the surrounding neighborhoods to the town center as well as visitors from throughout the region.
- Implement benches and trash receptacles at suitable locations throughout the town center to encourage residents and visitors to rest and linger.
- Incorporate public art at strategic locations in the town center that enhance the pedestrian environment.
- Consider establishing a golf cart system during special events, perhaps in partnership with the golf course, to move people between parking, event venues, and other important town center destinations.

- Continue to keep the city's Facebook page and website up-to-date as the community redevelops and changes over time. Utilizing currently.