

Press Release

City of Montesano Downtown Planning Project
May 20th Public Meeting, Council Chambers

On May 20th, 2009, the Downtown Montesano Planning Project held its first Open House and Public Meeting at the Council Chambers, in City Hall. There was a good representation from the Planning Commission and City Council. Several members from the local business community and a number of residents were also present. Three young school children also actively participated in the 2-hour discussion.

The meeting started off with an overview of the project's goals to renew and rejuvenate the downtown area. This was followed by a brief description of the project's schedule and outcomes. Adam Brown, a Planner at CREÄ Affiliates, LLC the consulting company hired to lead the planning effort, went over descriptions of the city's utility systems and population trends. This information will be considered in the final plan for the downtown area.

The meeting also offered an opportunity for participants to share their concerns about the downtown area. Residents talked about the challenges such as attracting new investment to the area, drawing travelers and tourists from Highway 12, and the lack of adequate parking in downtown.

Anindita Mitra the Founding Principal of CREÄ clarified that while the obstacles may appear daunting, when Montesano's numerous advantages are considered, such as downtown's close proximity to the highway off-ramp, and the City's relative location to the coast and Olympic National Forest; overcoming the challenges is not a matter of 'if' but 'when.'

In the second half of the meeting, the discussion focused on community goals. During a brainstorming exercise, the community helped identify and then prioritize goals for downtown's future development. A new theater/art district, a community center, a farmers market, and drawing new locally-owned businesses to downtown, were shortlisted as the highest priorities.

The meeting concluded with a conversation about strategies for implementing the plan. This discussion will continue at the next public meeting, scheduled for **June 18th, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., in the Council Chambers at Montesano City Hall**. Three different futures for the downtown area will be presented at that meeting. The public will help develop the most desirable development scenario for downtown.

This meeting is the second of four public meetings planned for this project. These meetings are helping mould the future for the downtown area. City leaders are looking to the public to get involved and share their ideas. The plan will help inform the city's Strategic plan, new zoning and design standards for the downtown area, and an implementation/financing strategy to help set the vision in motion.

If you are not already involved, there are a number of ways for you to participate.

A three-minute **online survey** is available to the public, giving residents who are unable to attend these meetings an opportunity to voice their opinions. To take the survey, visit http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=lfZPygEP4F9baA2e2ZrCdw_3d_3d. A **Facebook Group** has also been created for this project. When in Facebook, search for Downtown Montesano Plan (2009-2010) and join the group! Other residents with questions or concerns that are not on Facebook are encouraged to contact Adam Brown at abrown@crea-affiliates.com, or (Phone 206 297 3045).