



Business

Yes, on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Major Projects Give Downtown Gulfport Extreme Makeover

Today in the City of Gulfport on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, the largest façade grant program in the nation's history, a \$4.425 million project, and a \$7.6 million streetscape project are providing the downtown area a dramatic makeover and preparing it for a future of continued growth.

While the federally funded projects are giving downtown Gulfport a new look, they are using the City's "old" look as a guide for the multi-million dollar facelift. Maintaining the historical integrity of the area has been a major consideration of the Gulfport Main Street Association, which is implementing the projects.

The façade grant program is providing new exteriors to more than 65 downtown buildings. Twelve buildings have been completed, and all improvements are expected to be finished by mid-summer 2009. The building renovations are in large part historically accurate, embracing and preserving the structures' original architecture.

The streetscape project will restore the historic boulevard on 25th Avenue (U.S. 49), the main thoroughfare through downtown, which runs directly to the Port at Gulfport. Improvements will include a landscaped median with palm trees, giving a nod to the 1940's gateway into Gulfport from Beach Boulevard (U.S. 90), which runs east/west along the Gulf of Mexico. The project will also repair or replace sidewalks, curbs and gutters, street furnishings and plantings in the core of downtown, as well as upgrade an existing WWII Memorial and surrounding areas.

The physical improvements to the streetscape come on the heels of a complete overhaul of the downtown district's infrastructure, which has provided the capacity to serve water and sewer to current and future developments.

The façade and streetscape projects, both funded through Mississippi Development Authority's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, are meant to encourage private investment among private property owners in an effort to revitalize the City's central business district as a whole.

"Our downtown area has tremendous potential, and we are unleashing its potential through these extensive renovations," said Lisa Bradley, executive director of the Gulfport Main Street Association. "Combined with surrounding projects like the revitalization of the Jones Park, rebuilding of our Small Craft Harbor and the new plans for the port, downtown Gulfport will be the complete package."



www.mscoast.org • hcdc@mscoast.org
12292 Intraplex Parkway • Gulfport, MS 39503
Phone: 228-896-5020 • Fax: 228-896-6020