

Chehalis Community Renaissance Team

Overview

January 2015



The Plan, Bottom Line and Mission

What is the Chehalis Renaissance Plan?

A citywide plan with projects in community building, economic development, quality design, traffic & parking, and downtown development.

What is the Overall Goal---the Bottom Line?

Make the Chehalis area a more attractive place in which to live, enhance job opportunities and involvement of youth; grow tourism traffic; and grow the retail base to enhance local shopping.

What is the Mission of the CCRT (Chehalis Community Renaissance Team)?

Driven by voluntary leadership, broad community participation and using disciplined project management, implement the Council-approved plan.



Adopted by the CCRT

October 9, 2009

Renaissance Background

- RFQ process with many firms – 4/2007
- Selected consultant Tom Beckwith – 11/2007
- Steering committee formed for guidance – 2/2007
- Many public meetings/open houses
- Draft plans and guidelines developed and refined
- Final action plan was completed and approved – 5/2009 with five areas:
 - I Community Building
 - II Economic Development
 - III Quality Design
 - IV Traffic & Parking
 - V Downtown Development



I. Community Building Tasks

- Implement New Chehalis Brand
 - Signage, website, logo, tagline
- Initiate Young Chehalis Outreach
 - Young professionals group
- Adopt Main Street Program
 - National program, retain, recruit, promote, and improve
 - Business directory & walking tour
 - Arts festival & sculpture walk
 - Farmers Market



II. Economic Development Tasks

- Initiate Business Retention & Recruitment Program
 - Downtown real estate, art galleries
- Expand Local Capital Investment
 - Façade program, small business loans
- Create an Integrated Business Incubator
- Create a SCORE group of consultants to assist start ups and non-profits



III. Quality Design Tasks

- Adopt standards for districts, landscape, signage
- National historic signage on I-5 (park and wayfinding)
- Highlight major gateways (roundabout, building murals)
- Erect system of wayfinding signs
- Create Dillenbaugh Creek conservancy park
- Investigate movement of steam train boarding location
- Install street trees on major arterials
- Create gateway at the National/Market/West intersection
- Enhance Market & Boistfort, including extending curbs & walkways at intersections



IV. Traffic & Parking Tasks

- Realign West Street/Market Boulevard
- Designate Park Street 1-way at library
- Incorporate left turn lanes for Main Street
- Install angle parking where feasible in downtown



V. Downtown Development Tasks

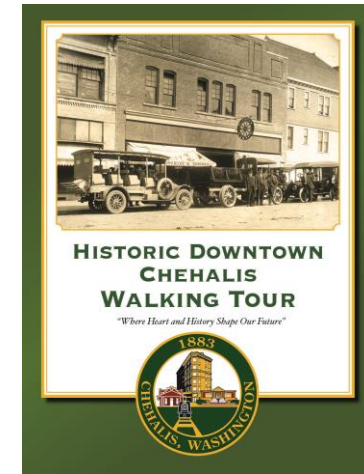
- Support Lewis County admin. center project
- Renovate St. Helens Hotel for mixed use
- Issue RFP for mixed use project on Washington Avenue
 - Design will include same amount of current parking
 - Project will be a competition
- Issue RFP for mixed use project on Division Street
 - Design will include same amount of current parking
 - Project will be a competition



Completed Projects & Activities

2009

- Economic Development Steering Committee renamed Chehalis Community Renaissance Team (CCRT) and charged with implementing the Renaissance Plan
- New Chehalis logo adopted
- City adopted new tagline, “Chehalis – Where Heart and History Shape Our Future”
- CCRT goal and mission statement adopted
- Chehalis Avenue parking pilot installed
- Historic Downtown Chehalis Walking Tour booklet published
- Friends of the Chehalis Community Renaissance 501(c)3 formed



2010

- Litter pick-up implemented using Reliable Enterprises; ongoing activity
- I-5 historic district and city park signs installed by WSDOT
- 50+ wayfinding signs installed, including new city limit signs
- Children’s Museum action team formed; community visioning meeting held; group participated in numerous community events to garner interest
- Received Governor’s Smart Choice Award for the quality of implementation of the Renaissance Plan
- City Hall planter boxes weeded and new plants, shrubs, and grasses planted by volunteers
- Welcome to Chehalis bags distributed through PUD
- Received the Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association & Planning Association of Washington Joint Awards Program for citizen involvement for the Renaissance Plan



Completed Projects & Activities

2010 Continued

- \$20K grant awarded to replace/expand irrigation system on North Market Boulevard
- New city website launched from cooperative effort between City and CCRT
- New trees planted on Louisiana Avenue

2011

- New irrigation system installed; funded by \$20K grant; new drip irrigation, soil, and plants installed in several islands
- Feasibility study completed for Lewis County Children's Museum; planning process for pilot museum started
- Plaques installed on several historic walking tour buildings; \$4,500 donated by Chehalis Foundation; \$1,000 from anonymous donor; \$100 from each building owner
- Chehalis Avenue street pilot completed with 60% approval rating; included excellent community participation. Received \$90,860 beautification/traffic-calming/safety enhancements grant and a \$282,741 TIB preservation grant received for street resurfacing
- \$66,000 grant awarded to Port of Chehalis to complete an incubator feasibility study; incubator will focus on renewable (solar) energy
- Chehalis Storefront Art Project installed two displays in empty storefronts
- Marketing Committee formed

2012

- \$20,000 donated by Chehalis Foundation for new holiday decorations; focus was on Main Street
- Second phase of wayfinding project completed with installation of pedestrian kiosks at Lewis County Historical Museum, Steam Train, Library, Veterans Memorial Museum, Recreation Park, and Market/Boistfort intersection



Completed Projects & Activities

2012 Continued

- Chehalis-Centralia Airport provided \$25,000 for improvement/beautification of Louisiana Avenue roundabout
- Marketing Committee created/distributed Chehalis visitor brochure and event rack cards – to be printed annually; “Experience Chehalis” e-newsletter and Facebook launched
- Eight pots and trees installed on North Market Boulevard; 25 of 34 islands/pots sponsored with annuals by 17 individuals/businesses
- Desired option of testing and evaluation of thin film technologies determined not feasible for business incubator; focus changed to small scale production
- Lewis County Children’s Museum renamed “Discover! Children’s Museum”

2013

- Discover! Children’s Museum six-month pilot opened in the Twin City Town Center, funded by private foundations; pilot response exceeded expectations and closing date was twice extended to December 29, 2013; Discover! saw 15,218 (one-third included drop-in visitors) paid admissions; work will begin in 2014 on a permanent location.
- Bids for the Chehalis Avenue resurfacing/beautification project were over the engineer’s estimate. Project will be rebid January 2014; CCRT to sponsor trees and plantings.
- Marketing Committee launched mobile version of city website, including the Historic Downtown Chehalis Walking Tour; received \$11,000 in tourism funding for 2014 projects; bolstered fan base from 1,000 to 3,000 using Facebook ads; applied for “Main Street” designation; updated/distributed 2013 Chehalis visitors guide and event card; continued monthly e-newsletter
- Schematic drawing completed for “PUD Park” at Main and Quincy. Concept includes art using recycled pieces from the former PUD substation, planters, benches, fountain, and electronic reader board.



Completed Projects & Activities

2013 Continued

- \$10,000 donated by The Chehalis Foundation for new holiday decorations; focus was on Chehalis Avenue
- Litter pick-ups ongoing by Reliable Enterprises
- Business Incubator put on hold until the right match can be found. EDC still looking into the idea.
- Individuals and businesses sponsored the planting of annuals in all 34 islands/tree pots in the 400 and 500 blocks of Market Boulevard; donations also received for Pope's Kids Place as part of sponsorship program; \$650 was presented to Pope's
- Retained the services of PARC (Public Affairs Research Consultants) Resources to seek private/public grant funding to address several Renaissance projects; PARC is working with the Chehalis-Centralia Railroad & Museum to assist with updating their strategic plan



2014

- Official board of directors and officers elected to Discover! Children's Museum; pursuing federal non-profit status; adopted tagline, "Education Through Play" to emphasize board's top priority of early childhood education. Plans progressing for a permanent facility with an estimated cost of nearly \$4 million for construction and first year operation (\$500,000 to \$750,000 will come from in-kind services). Presentations and presence at community events continue to keep Discover! in the public eye.
- Resurfacing and beautification of Chehalis Avenue completed by City. Renaissance will provide trees and plantings at estimated cost of \$8,000.



Completed Projects & Activities

2014 Continued

- Marketing and tourism efforts continued through print and social media sources – Chehalis visitor brochure and event rack card, monthly e-newsletter, Experience Chehalis Facebook page, reprinting of Historic Walking Tour. Began collection of photos for use in marketing efforts. Received \$10,000 in tourism funding for 2015 projects.
- Received Main Street designation.
- Began “Choose Local First” campaign in partnership with the Centralia Downtown Association and the Chamber.
- Holiday Decorations Committee presented multi-year plan/funding request to the Chehalis Foundation; received \$17,000. 2014 focused on the new Aquatics Center/Recreation Park. Constructed 84-foot train for 13th Street city entrance. Local artist, Karen Betts, hired to paint windows on city buildings.
- Five-year strategic plan and financial audit completed for the Chehalis-Centralia Railroad & Museum, which was paid by Friends. These projects will allow the CCRM to apply for grants.
- Individuals/businesses sponsored the planting of annuals in all 34 islands/tree pots in the 400/500 blocks of Market Boulevard, along with hanging baskets. This project is a partnership between the CCRT, the City, Kaija’s Garden & Pet, and the W.F. West High School FFA class. \$500 donated to the Shaw Aquatics Center.
- The Downtown Revitalization Group (DRG) was formed to look at potential uses for vacant, historic buildings in the downtown district.
- The CCRT, in partnership with the City and Lewis County, is working to purchase a 20-mile section of Tacoma Rail line from Maytown to Chehalis. CCRT provided \$15,000 as matching funds for a grant submitted to the EDA to complete a feasibility study.



Completed Projects & Activities

2015

- Completed wayfinding signage project funded by .09 grant funds to update and print new wayfinding signs that were installed in all six kiosks, and delivered to several locations throughout town, such as hotels and the chamber. Purchased two visitor parking signs in the primary visitor parking lot in historic downtown; the signs replaced old signs that were less visible and had the former logo
- Approached by city's Employee Wellness Committee to help promote the Gratitude Graffiti Project activity to the community (a 40-day practice of purposeful appreciation of one's life through interactive art using "gratitude stops" throughout the community for people to express their gratitude). Seven businesses participated in the event.
- Continued membership in WA State Main Street Program – attended conferences; completed required reports; created database of all businesses/buildings within the Main Street district; updated work plan; met w/ select businesses regarding B&O Tax Credit Program, but unable to secure any B&O dollars for an executive director as required.
- Discover! Children's Museum continued work on constructing a permanent facility. Letters of inquiry/grant requests underway;
- Chehalis Avenue islands were installed with trees, perennial plants, and annuals as committed by CCRT following the Chehalis Avenue improvement project done by the city. Market Boulevard islands planted with annuals through sponsorship by businesses/ individuals.
- Storefront Display Project absorbed under Downtown Revitalization Group (DRG) with a new volunteer to lead; it has proven difficult to get building owners to participate; one new display erected featuring the Lewis County Historical Museum.
- Holiday Decorations Committee sent letters to all residences through utility bills encouraging everyone to decorate for the holidays; local artist, Karen Betts, again painted holiday scenes on windows throughout the business community; upgraded existing inventory.
- Conducted assessment survey to determine member's interest in serving on CCRT committees.



Completed Projects & Activities

2015

- Started quarterly, no host CCRT dinners as a way for CCRT members to get to know each other on a more personal level in an informal setting. This was something our mentor, Gail Shaw, liked doing and wanted us to continue.
- Annalee Tobey appointed by Chehalis city manager to lead the CCRT.
- Andy Skinner appointed Vice Chair of CCRT by Chehalis city manager.
- A consultant-led SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) was conducted for the CCRT; information garnered will be used to brainstorm project ideas
- Adopt A Block Program started in Centralia to bring people together to make our cities cleaner and to create a stronger sense of community responsibility and ownership; partnership between Lewis County Watch and The Chronicle; launch party held in October; one cleanup to-date with 12 blocks being adopted in Chehalis
- Marketing and tourism efforts continued through print and social media sources – Chehalis visitor brochure and event rack card, monthly e-newsletter, Experience Chehalis Facebook page, reprinting of Historic Walking Tour. Secured tourism funding for 2016 projects. Asked by city to design Official Visitor Guide for Lewis County; guide to be distributed through Certified Rack and locally by February 1. Created “Networking with Chehalis Businesses & Organizations” Facebook group as a forum to share ideas, experiences, or to ask questions. Partnered with Santa Lucia Coffee, located in Centralia to create a Chehalis coffee blend with the goal of getting it into restaurants and businesses. Continued Choose Local First Campaign.



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Awards

- June 25, 2010 – Chehalis was one of three, and the only small city, to be presented with the ***Governor's Smart Choice Award*** for the quality of implementation of the Renaissance Plan.
- July 15, 2010 – Chehalis was notified that we are the winners of the ***Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association & Planning Association of Washington Joint Awards Program*** for citizen involvement for the Renaissance Plan.



What is different?

The Chehalis Renaissance Project . . .

- is driven by volunteers. The City is a partner.
- is counting on and encourages citizens to provide leadership and work in partnership with the CCRT.
- is primarily relying upon private investments and donations.
- will be a combination of many small, some medium, and a few large projects.
- has earned a reputation in the Chehalis community for getting things done through the teamwork and capability of the CCRT.
- strives to provide confidence in our supporters that your investment of time, support and money will be well invested.
- is an opportunity for citizen volunteers to put a permanent, positive stamp on the Chehalis community.



Chehalis Renaissance Supporters

Anonymous Donors
ARTrails of Southwest Washington
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Buck's Logging
Buzzard & Associates
Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of
Commerce
Chehalis-Centralia Airport Board
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Kaija's Garden & Pet
Gary & Kirsten Klein

Lewis Co. Distressed Counties Fund Grant
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Lockerby Foundation (Shaw Family)
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Twin Cities Trading Post

Twin Cities Youth Football
Walmart
WA State Transp. Enhancement Grant
WA State Transp. Improvement Board Grant
Western Washington Railroad
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