

## **Citizens Attend Successful Downtown Redevelopment Meetings**

*Series of five meetings with Downtown Amarillo, Inc. and Wallace Bajjali*

Dateline: Amarillo, May 5, 2011 — Downtown Amarillo, Inc (DAI) reported today on successful neighborhood meetings updating citizens about the downtown redevelopment process. The meetings, co-sponsored with City master developer Wallace Bajjali Development Partners, were held April 28 — May 5 in five geographic areas in Amarillo: Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest, and Downtown.

“This has been an opportunity for people of good will to come together, ask questions and learn from each other,” said DAI Executive Director Melissa Dailey. “We answered more than a hundred questions, and gathered meaningful feedback from people all across the City. These neighborhood meetings are part of our ongoing commitment to a transparent public process, and we will sponsor more opportunities like this in the near future.”

Dailey started each meeting with a presentation about the history of downtown, from early prosperity through a cycle of abandonment, and today’s current push for revitalization. Joe Esch, from Wallace Bajjali, followed Dailey with a presentation explaining how his firm is undertaking the exploration process directed by the City Commission regarding the City-owned Civic Center redevelopment area. City representatives attended the meetings, and Commissioner Brian Eades helped answer questions from the City’s perspective.

In addition to the City-wide meetings, Wallace Bajjali also met with more than 500 Amarillo citizens by speaking at events hosted by the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce, Young Professionals, and a variety of companies and community groups. “DAI and Wallace Bajjali will continue to reach out and gain input, goals and ideas from thousands of Amarillo citizens throughout this process,” said Dailey. “We’re thrilled about the support and input that has been offered.”

“I am inspired by Amarillo,” said Esch. “Amarilloans are strong, courageous, faithful people who never turn away from a challenge. When the original Great Depression hit America in the 1920s, Amarillo responded by building Amarillo College. Throughout her history, Amarillo and her people have risen to meet and triumph over challenges. I’m convinced that this will happen again with the revitalization of downtown.”

The neighborhood meetings—held at multiple locations for citizens’ convenience—drew several hundred residents. More than eighty people signed up to ask questions, with additional comment cards turned in. “These meetings support the kinds of dialogue and outreach that are crucial to this project,” said Dailey. “Questions ranged from how the process works to how projects become prioritized, and from the kinds of housing that can develop downtown to specific projects suggestions such as an aquatic center.”

The meetings were also an opportunity to set the record straight, noted Esch. “There are people in the community who do not have all the facts and are spreading misinformation,” Esch said. “Some folks seem to believe that if they spread this misinformation loud enough, that the truth won’t matter. Well, the truth does matter, and we are using these public meetings to set the record straight and provide the facts. We look forward to meeting with any community group - no matter how large or small - to answer questions and receive feedback.”

Video archives of the public meetings, along with comments, questions and answers, are being posted on DAI’s web site. For more information about Downtown Amarillo and the public redevelopment process, and to provide feedback, please explore the resources online at [www.downtownamarillo.com](http://www.downtownamarillo.com).

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