

Where Do We Go From Here?

The voters have spoken. Downtown revitalization has lost the battle, but could it still win the war?

Of the numerous letters to the Sandpiper in opposition to Prop. J, one third explicitly made the point that revitalization is desirable: “[D]owntown Del Mar needs revitalizing”, and “what Del Mar requires [is] a viable and enforceable village revitalization that projects and protects the essence of Del Mar”. Add in those who actually supported Prop. J and revitalization could well enjoy majority approval.*

So what’s the next step?

The most explicit proposal came from Frank Chisari: “The City Council could... create committees of citizen volunteers to establish priorities and identify elements that they, the citizens, want to incorporate into a new [Downtown Specific] Plan.” Others agreed: “We can cooperate to make Del Mar the place we all want it to be. [W]e could move in that direction, together, by establishing a set of priorities to deal with the issues the VSP trie[d] to address and then implement those priorities in a staged, measured, and democratic way.” And: “We can preserve the best characteristics of Del Mar and move forward with revitalization - adoption of an appropriate plan for our community... with involvement of representative proportions of resident/business communities from its inception.”

As Chisari obviously recognizes, the city council is key to any future activity in the revitalization arena. Given the questionable judgment exhibited by the council during the run-up to placing Prop. J on the November ballot, it may be asking too much that it wipe the egg off its face and move forward. But for the long-term good of the community, that’s exactly what it must do.

The council should set as its top priority the creation of what we can for convenience refer to as the “Chisari Committees”. Not only is such active citizen involvement part and parcel of what has become known as “The Del Mar Way”, it explicitly recapitulates the process that four decades ago led to our Community Plan.

In summary, “everyone agrees that Del Mar needs refurbishment.” Is making this happen something that a majority of us could unite upon, thereby helping to heal the present divisions in our community?

* Please note: All individuals quoted here were opposed to Prop. J.