

# Roaming Around Reidsville

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I have always thought Reidsville is a picturesque City with lovely older homes and a quaint downtown. The addition of local artist Brad Spencer's brick sculptures and scenic spots like Mural Park and Kelly's Way have only added to the City's downtown appeal.

But you can't rest on your laurels! Enter Project DREAM, otherwise known as the "Downtown Reidsville Empowering Art Movement". This initiative of the Reidsville Downtown Corporation (RDC) is part of that group's vision to



enhance Reidsville's downtown so that visitors and residents can enjoy a "unique and diverse" experience. So how are they planning to accomplish this? One way is to increase art in the downtown area through a variety of ways. Building on the rebirth of street art throughout the United States, the RDC has a four-phase plan to help beautify the downtown while, hopefully, enticing more shoppers into our local stores.

Project DREAM is spearheaded by RDC board member Melanie Morrison, who has been working extremely hard to make this project a reality. The first phase is to establish a new mural in downtown Reidsville. Our City is no stranger to murals. Back in 1985, the Reidsville Chamber of Commerce and the City of Reidsville helped create the area's first outdoor mural, which depicts a historical Reidsville. Another indoor mural done by noted artist Gordon Samstag is located at nearby Reidsville City Hall, a reminder of when that mural was commissioned for the then-Reidsville Post Office in 1938.

Plans are for the City's newest mural to provide a snapshot of present-day Reidsville, but I don't want to give away too much about the content! In order to help make this happen, the City's Planning Board and City Council will be considering in late September an amendment to Reidsville's Sign Ordinance, adding a section on original art murals. Following the necessary approvals, the mural will be located on the side of a local downtown business, thanks to the monetary contribution of a kind benefactor. The plan is for Reidsville artist Mary E. D. Ryan to be painting on the mural as part of the City's annual Fall Jubilee on Saturday, October 20. By that time, the hope is that the mural will be nearing completion so that visitors will be able to see this "art in the making". What a great idea!

"This is a perfect example of community collaboration among numerous entities," said Jeff Garstka, City Economic Development Director and RDC Board Member. "Under the leadership of President Eric Smith,

the RDC has taken the lead in partnering with the City on the DREAM project. And I understand Mr. Smith has plans of his own for a mural/art on the side of the Lucky City Brewing building.”

The second phase of the Project DREAM is already in the works. The RDC has identified 15 fire hydrants that can be painted with unique designs. Artists were invited to submit potential designs to the RDC by August 24. Of course, there were a few stipulations per Fire Chief David Bracken. The fire hydrant “bonnets” or tops will have to be blue, green or red because of regulations for hydrants and their use by fire departments. Nothing can be attached to them and camouflage is a “no-no” since the Fire Department must ensure hydrant visibility. As with the murals, fire hydrants can’t endorse a commercial business. And of course, no inappropriate or offensive words or imagery will be allowed.

The RDC plans to have a one-day Paint Party for artists to paint their hydrants sometime in September. If an artist can’t attend the one-day paint party, they must complete their hydrant by October 1.

The third phase of Project Dream will be filling vacant store windows with art, silhouettes of people/business activities and other designs. It has been shown that showcasing such art in empty storefronts not only improves the look of downtown but also helps properties look more appealing to potential buyers. It’s a “win-win” for the community!

And finally, the fourth phase of this endeavor is painting utility boxes, again with cute, whimsical designs that will attract the eye and improve the appearance of what is typically considered an eyesore. Like the other efforts we’ve mentioned, the RDC believes these metal utility boxes and meter boxes with unique art will be great conversation pieces and another reason to stroll the streets of downtown Reidsville.

As RDC officials have said, the hope for Project DREAM is to “put more feet on the downtown streets, more shoppers in our stores and more money back into the local economy.” Hats off to the RDC and Melanie Morrison for looking for creative ways to bring people to downtown Reidsville. The RDC, assisted by Main Street Manager Missy Matthews and Economic Development Director Jeff Garstka, has been working to ensure that downtown Reidsville is a vibrant, diverse and creative City center for many years to come.

We are thrilled to see our community pulling together for projects such as these. It’s all about becoming a part of “Team Reidsville”. You can either be on the sidelines and complain about things or you can be pro-active, taking to the field and creating a positive environment that people want to visit or be a part of, whether you are here for the day or you’ve lived here all your lives. It is often said that for any community, the hardest thing to do is to sell a City to its own residents! We have even taken the “Team Reidsville” concept to our local stores and encouraged retailers like Walmart to establish a line of “Team Reidsville” shirts, which they did. The t-shirts hit the stores in August. If you want the look of a more traditional jersey, then visit the Reidsville Chamber of Commerce, which has them for sale in a variety of sizes at its downtown Reidsville office. We hope you will support Walmart and the Chamber by purchasing these shirts and showing that you are proud to be a part of “Team Reidsville” and our Community of Champions.

But that's not the only thing going on in the City of Reidsville during the month of September! Check out these upcoming events.

**Downtown Cruise In on September 14<sup>th</sup>.**

This is the last one of the season! These monthly cruise-ins are sponsored by the EZ Street Cruisers Car Club. Held rain or shine, the cruise-ins feature cars that are from the year 1987 or older. Downtown streets close at 5:30 p.m. for the cruise-ins, which are held from 6-9 p.m. If interested in participating, contact Lou at 508-320-8751 or check out [www.ezstreetcruisers.com/](http://www.ezstreetcruisers.com/)

**Glow Run on Saturday, September 15<sup>th</sup>.**

Annie Penn Hospital is sponsoring this Glow Run fundraiser on Saturday, September 15, from 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. The City of Reidsville is helping co-sponsor this timed race, which seeks to benefit the All-Cancer Fund at Annie Penn. The Police Department is also assisting with the event.

**Let's Turn Market Square into the Beach on September 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

"Music on the Square" in September at Market Square in downtown Reidsville showcases the popular beach music sounds of Eric & the Chill Tones! The band will be hitting the stage from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Bring a chair! It's free! And the Beer Garden sponsored by the Reidsville Chamber of Commerce, will be open!

**"Wonder" Comes to the Big Screen at Market Square September 29<sup>th</sup>.**

Bring your chairs and blankets for this free showing of "Wonder" on the lawn of Market Square in downtown Reidsville on Saturday, September 29, starting around 8 p.m. (dusk).

**Other Happenings at Market Square.**

And as usual, the Downtown Farmers Market at Market Square continues every Saturday, Tuesday and Thursday from 7 a.m.-1 p.m. or until items run out! Visitors to the market will find a variety of items. SNAP/EBT, Farmers Market WIC, Debit and Credit are accepted. Interested in becoming a vendor? You can call Judy Yarbrough at 336-349-1099 to reserve a space. The market runs through October

**Get Your Zumba On!**

As usual, "Fitness on the Square" continues from 6-7 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays through the month of September, weather permitting, at Market Square. No rhythm required! And it's free!