

*City of Fort Walton Beach, FL*

# *Community Redevelopment Agency*

## *2022-2023*

### *Annual Report*



*Ft Walton Beach  
Community Redevelopment Agency  
105 Miracle Strip Parkway SW  
Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548  
850-586-7814  
[www.fwb.org/198/Community-Redevelopment-Agency](http://www.fwb.org/198/Community-Redevelopment-Agency)*



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*The Vision*

To ensure that the City of Fort Walton Beach CRA continues to be a waterfront-oriented community that provides a mixed-use urban environment with a diversity of housing, variety of employment opportunities; thriving downtown core; vibrant and distinctive neighborhoods; attractive parks, open spaces, and cultural amenities; and well-designed public street, transit facilities, greenways, trails and blue ways.



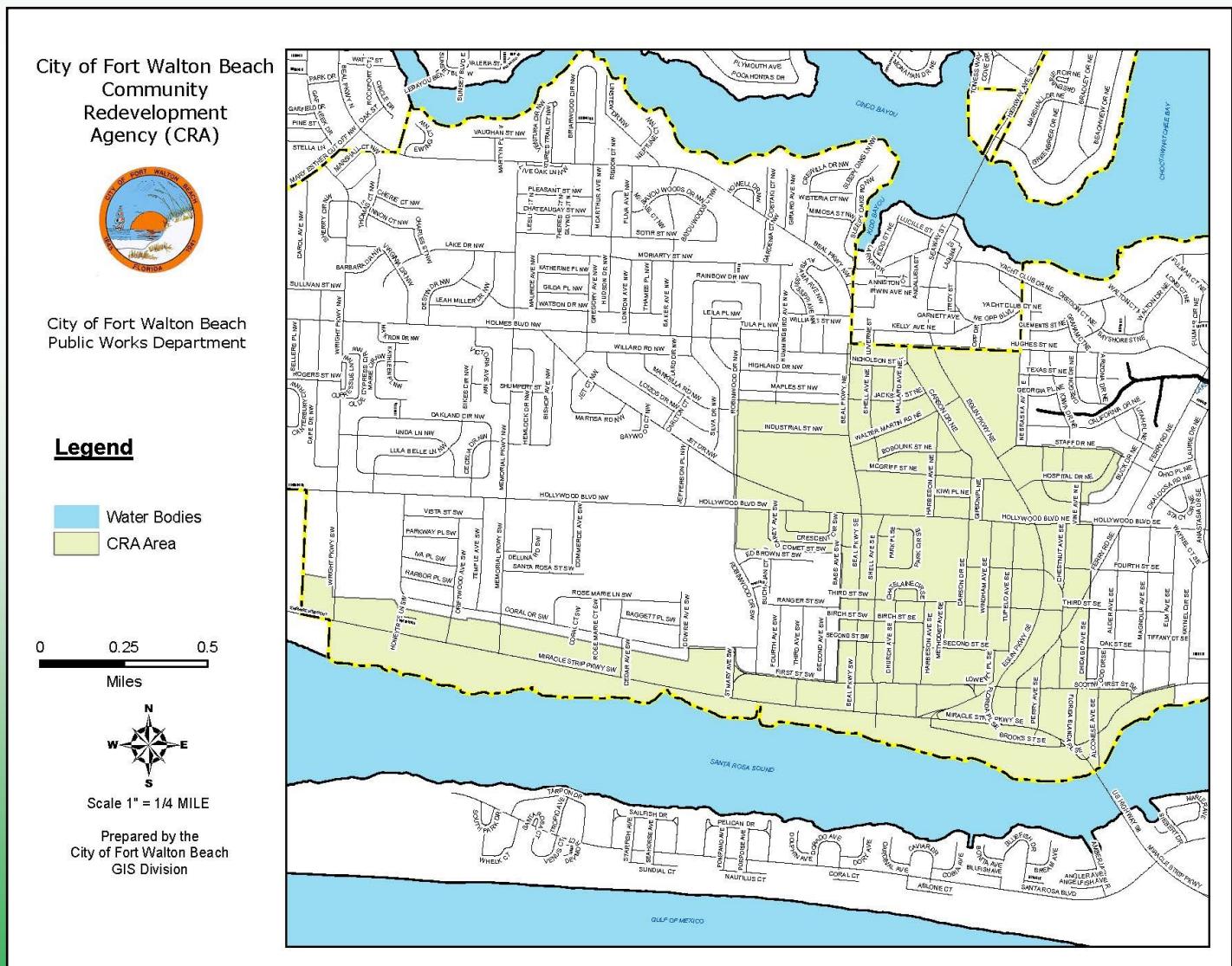
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# Community Redevelopment Agency Plan

## Purpose and District

The Fort Walton Beach CRA was established in 1977, with the Redevelopment Trust Fund and Community Redevelopment Agency following in 1982. The original CRA was focused primarily on the Downtown portion of the city along Miracle Strip Parkway/Hwy 98 and was approximately 222 acres. The boundaries were expanded with a plan update in 1998 adding an additional 385 acres for a total of 607 acres or about 12% of the overall City limits. In 2012, the CRA plan was updated to address changes that had taken place since adoption and refocus projects, programs, and initiatives to guide the redevelopment process for the next five years.

In 2018, per Florida Statute 163.361 (1), the CRA Plan was amended to expand the boundary to include three additional Areas of Concern that were considered “Blighted Areas” based on the findings concluded in the FON. Resolutions 2019-6 and 2019-7 for CRA expansions were adopted by the City Council on May 21, 2019 and extended the CRA District boundary to include an additional 219 acres resulting in a total of 826 acres. The current 2018 updated Fort Walton Beach Community Redevelopment Agency Plan is scheduled to sunset at 11:59 on December 31, 2048.



## *CRA Board Members*



**Council Member Travis Smith**



**Council Member Nic Allegretto**



**Council Member Bryce Jeter**



**Council Member David Schmidt  
CRA Chair**



**Council Member Gloria DeBerry**



**Council Member  
John Mead**



**Council Member  
Payne Walker**

## *CRA Administration*



**Jeff Peters  
City Manager**



**Chris Frassetti  
Growth Management Director**



**Alisa Burleson  
Administrator**

# CRA Year in Review

## Community Policing

Alisa Burleson, CRA Administrator received her certification as a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Practitioner (CPTED) with the Florida Crime Prevention Institute through the Florida Attorney Generals office.

CPTED is a crime prevention philosophy based on the theory that proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, as well as an improvement in the quality of life.

It emphasizes how people behave in and utilize the physical environment and what crime prevention strategies should be implemented to support desired activity by normal users while discouraging negative activity by abnormal users. The overlapping CPTED concepts include Natural Surveillance, Access Control, Territorial Reinforcement, and Maintenance.

A FWB CPTED Task Force was created to include the CRA Administrator, Community Police Force and representatives from Growth Management, Public Works and Utility Services, Recreation and Cultural Services, Public Relations, a FWB council member, and various neighborhood representatives based on area of concentration



### Completed CPTED Projects

#### The Gulfview Hotel

Problem:

Area used as storage for items left by the homeless



Solution:  
Fencing with locked gate.

Problem:  
Homeless sleeping under the ramp.



Solution:  
Blocked access.



Problem:  
Homeless using balcony as an encampment and leaving trash behind.



Solution:  
Monitored Security Cameras

Result:  
Dramatic decrease in calls to police.



#### 115 Church Street

Problem:

The homeless would hang out in this area waiting on food from Catholic Charities, eating under the trees and leaving trash behind.



Solution:  
Fencing with locked gate.



## CRA Restoration Projects



### Public Parking Lot Restoration

164 & 166 Miracle Strip Pkwy SE

On January 24, 2022 the FWB City Council unanimously approved the repaving of this parking lot. A portion of this lot is owned by BLN, LLC and is leased to the city for purpose of public parking for the downtown area. Project was completed by Memorial Day weekend.



### Bluewater Zoo Demolition for the Heritage Park and Cultural Center museum addition

Thanks to the generous donation of the property adjacent to the Heritage Park and Cultural Center by the Gibson family, the city was able to design and fund a much-needed expansion to the museum. Ground breaking began in August to prepare for the 4,800 square-foot expansion of this \$1.8 million project. This 2-story addition will give the museum a new entrance facing U.S. Highway 98 and provide space for a larger gift shop, administrative offices, storage, and an area for specialty programs. The museum addition is expected to be complete in April 2024. The Community Redevelopment Agency contributed \$400,000 toward this project.





### The Landing Park

**Phase One: \$2.3 mill**

This year brought in a long-anticipated renovation of The Landing Park. Due to the size of this project, it was divided into three phases. Phase One began this spring, which includes a new seawall, a concrete boardwalk along the waterfront, a new dock on the west end and a “pocket beach” and kayak launch on the park’s east side. The park improvements have a variety of funding sources, including the Community Redevelopment Agency, a Natural Resource Damage Assessment grant, RESTORE Acting funding, as well as funding from Okaloosa County’s Tourist Development Department and the Half-Cent surtax revenue.



**Old sign example**

### CRA Street Sign Upgrade

The purpose of this project was to upgrade all of the street signs within the CRA to highlight the CRA district. This is a seven phase project with phases one and two completed within the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Final phases are scheduled to be completed in 2023-2024 fiscal year.



**New sign example**

## *CRA Community Development Projects*

### Grant and Small Business Workshop

May 12, 2023

This free workshop was for individuals, entrepreneurs, and non-profit organizations looking for information and guidance for the creation, growth and support for art and culture-oriented facilities and or businesses. There was a total attendance of 30 individuals representing 12 companies and 11 individual artist/entrepreneurs.

The morning session provided information from the Florida Division of Arts and Culture regarding types of grants available from the state from general program support and specific cultural projects to cultural endowments and the acquisition, renovation, or construction of cultural facilities. Attendees also learned about the application and funding process and how to manage their grants.

Cadence Bank provided lunch prior to the afternoon session presentation by Operation Hope. This non-profit organization provided financial literacy, empowerment, and education. They demonstrated the pros and cons of starting a business as well as how to build a business plan, form a company, and look for startup capital.



**Development Incentive Grants Awarded**

**Total: \$44,250**

***Nicholas Sun  
Sun Kolache Donut & Tea  
Façade and  
Building Code Compliance Grants  
Total Award—\$14,250***



***Barry Gray  
105 Carson Dr  
Nuisance Abatement Grant  
Total Award—\$10,000***



***Valerie and Glenn Wenzel  
Burrito Del Sol  
Façade Grant  
Total Award—\$10,000***



***Merrell Properties, LLC  
189 Brooks St SE  
Façade Grant  
Total Award—\$10,000***



## *Financial Review*

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Fund encompasses 5.06% of the City's activities and services and accounts for funding derived from City of Fort Walton Beach and Okaloosa County Tax Increment Funding (TIF) - proceeds from increases in the taxable assessed value of the CRA District. The TIF is determined by the growth in the assessed value of taxable property located in the CRA district from the base year to the current tax year and is multiplied by the current tax rate for the City and County. Expenditures in the CRA area target eliminating blight in residential and commercial areas.

New Businesses in the CRA - 40

Approved CRA Grant Recipients - 4

Total CRA Awarded Grant funds - \$44,250

## *Adopted 2023 - 2024 CRA Budget*

Total Tax Revenue ..... \$2,847,344

City Original TIF	.....\$1,050,374
City Expanded TIF	.....\$ 504,967
County Original TIF	.....\$ 905,110
County Expanded TIF	.....\$ 386,893

	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
City Ad Valorem Taxes	\$1,555,341	\$ 44,734	2.9%
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$1,292,003	\$ 134,613	10.4%
Interest & Other	\$ 0	\$ 0	(100.0%)
Appropriations From Reserves	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>0.0%</u>
	<u>\$2,847,344</u>	<u>\$(1,420,653)</u>	<u>(49.9%)</u>

- The budget is predicated on the millage rate of 4.6116 mills for the City's portion of the TIF. One mill equals \$144.35 per \$1,000 of taxable property value.

Total Expenditures and Highlights ..... \$2,847,344

	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Personal Services ..... \$ 470,368	\$ (50,697)	(10.8%)
Operating & Maintenance ..... \$ 749,584	\$(1,418,583)	(189.2%)
Replenish Reserves ..... \$1,109,460	\$ 157,404	14.2%
Interfund Transfer ..... \$ 172,932	\$ 3,723	2.2%
Capital Outlay/Improvements ..... \$ 345,000	\$ (112,500)	(32.6%)
	<u>\$2,847,344</u>	<u>\$(1,420,653)</u>
	<u></u>	<u>(49.9%)</u>

- Decreases in Operational expenses are primarily due to the Landing Improvements Grant being budgeted in prior FY2022-2023.
- Decreases in Capital Outlay/Improvement are primarily due to Liza Jackson Park design and Heritage Park & Cultural Center addition being budgeted in prior FY2023-2023.



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