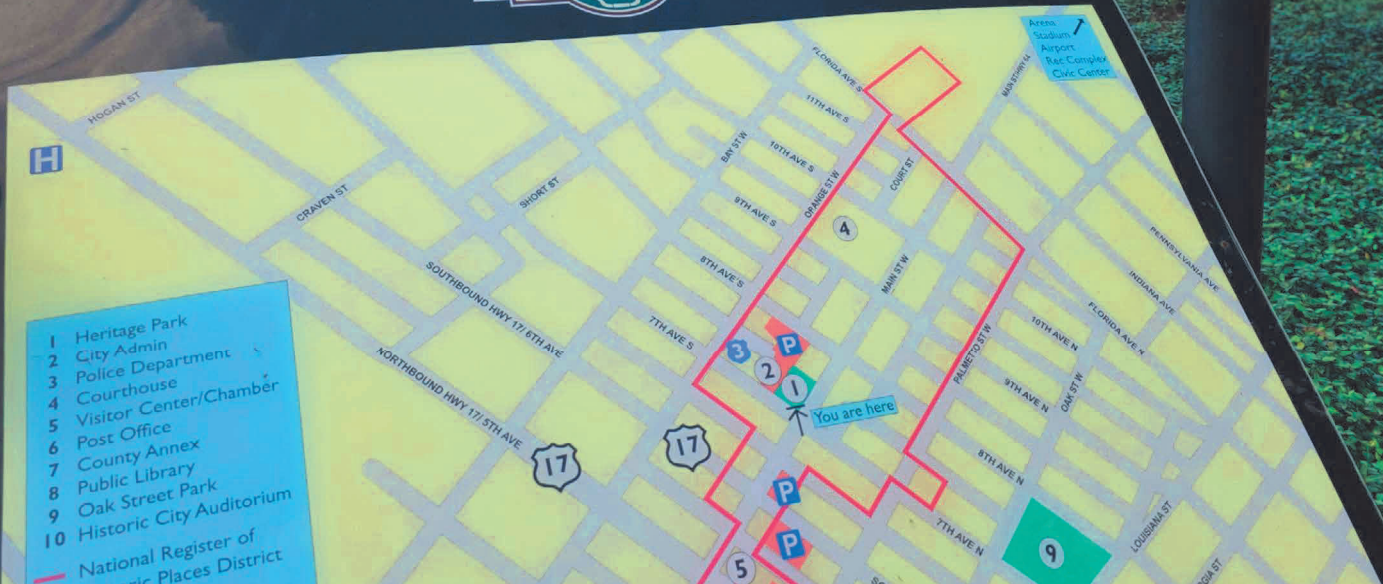


WAUCHULA COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

2026 Plan Update



DOWNTOWN





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The City of Wauchula Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) retained Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. to evaluate and update the adopted 2019 Community Redevelopment Plan. Established in accordance with Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes, the Wauchula CRA has served as a catalyst for community revitalization and redevelopment since its formation in 1997, when the original redevelopment plan was adopted by the CRA Board. The Amended and Updated 2026 Wauchula CRA Master Plan ("2026 Plan") provides a comprehensive framework to guide redevelopment activities, public investments, and community revitalization efforts throughout the CRA. Organized into 12 chapters, the Plan evaluates existing conditions, highlights recent accomplishments, identifies emerging opportunities, and establishes a strategic vision for the continued growth, enhancement, and long-term success of the Wauchula CRA.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION OVERVIEW

The 2026 Plan builds upon the vision established in the 2019 Plan ("Past Plan"), as well as prior plans and initiatives, and introduces three (3) key elements as part of this update, including:

- Updated Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) projections to reflect current conditions, anticipated revenues, and future investment priorities.
- Identification of catalyst redevelopment opportunities to encourage strategic public and private investments in key sites throughout the CRA.
- Continued investment in neighborhood stabilization programs through CRA initiatives, grant opportunities, housing improvement efforts, and partnerships with local, state and federal programs.

CHAPTER 2. PAST PLANS

The amended and updated CRA Plan represents a recommitment to the vision and progress established by the 2010 Plan. Subsequently, the 2019 Plan articulated a vision for the CRA based on an inventory and analysis of existing conditions within the City and CRA, supported by on-site field investigations and a review of adopted City plans. These investigations evaluated the transportation and pedestrian network, stormwater infrastructure, parking and circulation patterns, building conditions, landscaping, and overall aesthetics. The 2026 Plan builds upon the foundation established by both the 2010 and 2019 Plans by reaffirming their core goals while updating strategies, priorities, and implementation actions to address current conditions, emerging opportunities, and evolving community needs.

CHAPTER 3. 2026 PLAN UPDATE

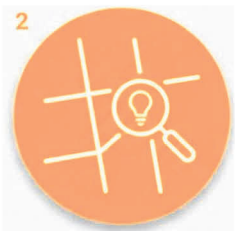
The 2026 Plan serves as a strategic update that builds upon Past Plan's efforts while responding to emerging opportunities, market conditions, and community priorities. This update refines the CRA's long-term vision by focusing on reinvestment, enhanced urban design, and strengthened neighborhood resilience. Guided by recent studies, stakeholder input, and evolving redevelopment goals, the 2026 Plan outlines a series of targeted initiatives designed to catalyze economic activity, improve the public realm, and ensure sustainable, community-driven growth. The following key components reflect the core elements of the 2026 Plan update.

The 2026 Plan introduces a forward-looking framework that emphasizes targeted redevelopment, neighborhood stabilization, and urban design elements. Key elements of the update include:



**Capital Improvements
Plan (CIP)**

Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) projections: Updated infrastructure investment priorities and funding projections will support redevelopment objectives throughout the CRA.



**Catalyst Site
Identification**

Catalyst Site Identification: Strategic catalyst sites have been identified through this Plan (Ch. as well as plans prepared by CRA partners to encourage investment, improve connectivity, and support a mix of uses throughout the CRA.



**CRA Grant Programs
(Community
Redevelopment Agency)**

CRA Grant Program: Continued investment in neighborhood stabilization remains a core priority. The CRA grant program will be expanded to support housing rehabilitation, façade improvements, and other initiatives that strengthen residential areas and promote long-term community resilience.

CHAPTER 4. CRA GOALS

CRA goals are presented, providing broad-based goals serving as a guide for capital improvements and programming of projects. Goals are categorized into four categories, including land use, economic development, transportation and mobility, and cultural and recreational resources.

CHAPTER 5. CRA PROGRAMS/PARTNERS

Programs and partners of the CRA are identified, including Main Street Wauchula Inc. (MSW) and the Industrial Development Authority (IDA, aka The Development Group (TDG)). Commercial revitalization grants, development incentives, and other programs that support redevelopment within the CRA are detailed.



CHAPTER 6. TIF PROJECTIONS

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) provides the primary source of funding for the CRA and is detailed throughout the chapter. TIF funds are generated from the observed increase in property values for those properties located within the CRA; TIF funds are received from both the City of Wauchula and Hardee County. An overview of TIF fundamentals and a taxable value and revenue projection is provided for the term of the CRA.

CHAPTER 7. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM (CIP)

The CIP provides the CRA and City with guidance for future projects and development within the City as a whole. As the CRA budget and capital improvements planning are incorporated into the City's budgeting process, projects within the CRA are identified in the City's Five-Year Schedule of Capital Improvements. The Five-Year Schedule of Capital Improvements provides project names, schedules of work, and their consistency with the vision presented in this Community Redevelopment Plan.

CHAPTER 8. CATALYST SITES

A catalyst site is typically an underutilized or strategically located area with the potential to drive economic, social, or physical transformation within its surroundings. This chapter identifies potential catalyst sites along with conceptual designs developed in collaboration with the City and CRA. Site selection was guided by factors such as ownership, proximity to downtown, development feasibility, and alignment with community priorities.

CHAPTER 9. BONDING

This chapter explores the potential use of bonding as a financing tool to accelerate implementation of major CRA projects and capital improvements. Bonding may provide flexibility to advance high-priority initiatives sooner than would otherwise be possible through annual funding alone, allowing the CRA to respond to redevelopment opportunities and community needs in a more timely manner.

CHAPTER 10. NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACT & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Building upon the vision established in the 2010 and 2019 Plans, neighborhood impact and affordable housing is discussed in this chapter, detailing recent successes in the development of housing stock in downtown Wauchula and new parks and recreation advancements. These add to the quality of life of the community and will act as economic drivers.

CHAPTER 11. CRA GRANT PROGRAM

The chapter includes a summary of various grant and funding opportunities available, grouped by relevance to the CRA. The amounts vary across the state and federal grants identified.

CHAPTER 12. OVERVIEW, SUMMARY, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the 2026 Plan and its recommendations. Building upon the vision established in the 2019 Plan, the CRA will continue to support housing redevelopment, economic development, transportation and mobility improvements, and investment in parks and recreational resources that enhance quality of life and community vitality.



1. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

The Wauchula Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was established in 1997, with the goal of transforming and revitalizing the city. The CRA's mission involves guiding sustainable development, enhancing the city's aesthetic appeal, stimulating economic growth, and improving the quality of life for Wauchula's residents.

The CRA's first plan was adopted in 1997, with updates in 2010 and 2019. The City of Wauchula Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) contracted Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. to provide a review and update of the adopted 2010 CRA Plan. The latest plan, adopted in September 2019, focuses on five key elements: (1) an updated CIP with TIF projections, (2) the development of parks and recreation plans, (3) the extension of the CRA's term to 2057, (4) advancements in affordable and workforce housing, and (5) further economic development initiatives. This plan outlines a comprehensive approach to redevelopment aimed at creating a unified, inclusive, and economically vibrant community. It includes detailed market analysis, neighborhood impact assessments, and community outreach efforts to ensure that the redevelopment initiatives align with community needs and aspirations.

The plan included a detailed analysis of the city's existing conditions and a segmentation of the CRA into four distinct geographic areas for targeted improvements. These areas were identified as Downtown Core, North CRA, South CRA, and East CRA/Peace River, each with specific strengths, challenges, and opportunities. The plan emphasized infrastructure improvements, aesthetic enhancements, housing development, economic development, and the promotion of local businesses.

The 2026 Plan will incorporate the key findings and initiatives established in the previous plans as well as the related studies that the County, City of Wauchula, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) have completed in recent years.

HISTORICAL REFERENCE

The City of Wauchula CRA contains over 1,579.6 acres covering 79% of the City of Wauchula and encompasses approximately 1,690 parcels within the limits of the City of Wauchula. The CRA's initial time frame and boundary were established in 1997 as part of the initial CRA Master Plan adoption and implementation. The boundary was expanded in 2010, adding sixteen additional properties and extending its term five years terminating in 2027. This was extended again in 2019, to incorporate a sunset date of 2057.

Since the CRA was created prior to July 1, 2006, it predates requirements set forth in Chapter 163.340, F.S. limiting a CRA to no more than 80% of a community. If an expansion was desired however, an updated Finding of Necessity (FON) would be required. The statutes provide that prior to exercising the benefits created by the community redevelopment authority, the City must adopt a resolution supported by data and analysis that establishes ability for the City Commission to find that the conditions in the targeted area(s) meet established criteria found in Florida Statutes.

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

Wauchula was incorporated in 1902 along the Florida Southern railroad, north of old Fort Hartsuff. Wauchula, the county seat of Hardee County. The community initially grew up around Fort Hartsuff, one of the many military forts during the Seminole Wars. The town was an economic and social center in rural central Florida in the early settlement days.

The Florida Southern Railway named Wauchula in 1886 when it extended its route and set up a depot. The name was derived from the Miccosoukee Indian word Wa-tu-la-ha-kee, meaning "call of the sand hill crane". Banks and stores opened quickly, and like many railroad towns along the Peace River, Wauchula benefited from the phosphate boom, the endless citrus groves, and the roving cattle.

Banks, general stores, and other businesses swiftly opened, transforming the town into a vibrant rural center. Today, Wauchula is known for its natural attractions, laid back lifestyle, and enduring small-town charm, offering a small glimpse into Florida's rich frontier past while serving an important role in the state's agricultural backbone.



Today, Wauchula retains much of its historic character, particularly within the Downtown Core, which is designated as the Historic Downtown Commercial (HC1) District. The Downtown Wauchula Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and includes a concentration of historic buildings that reflect the City's architectural and cultural heritage. The H-C zoning district is intended to foster pedestrian oriented, mixed-use development that preserves the City's historic structures while accommodating compatible commercial and residential uses, an approach the CRA has consistently advanced through its programming, funding initiatives, and the goals of this Plan.



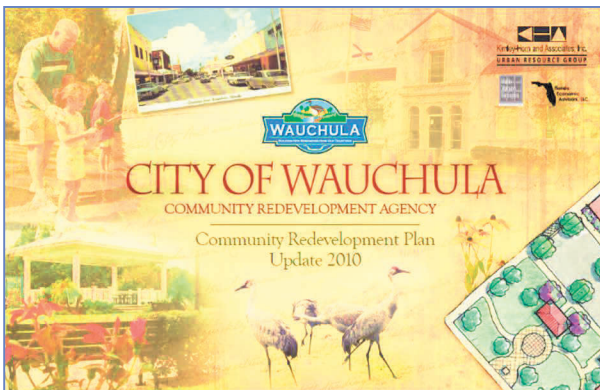
The CRA includes 1,690 parcels encompassing nearly the entirety of the City. Appendix 1 includes the City's current Zoning Map and the City's current Future Land Use Map. Those maps highlight the concentration of development in the downtown core as well as the broader distribution of land use and zoning throughout the CRA.

2. PAST PLANS

2010 PLAN REFERENCE

2026 Plan Update Note: The following planning areas and observations were originally identified in the 2010 CRA Master Plan. While significant progress has been made since that time, many of the opportunities and challenges identified in the 2010 Plan remain relevant today. The CRA has actively invested in projects and programs throughout the community to address these needs and advance redevelopment objectives. The 2010 Plan was intended to establish a long-term framework for revitalization, recognizing that implementation would occur over multiple planning horizons and funding cycles. The 2026 Plan builds upon this foundation by evaluating past accomplishments, recognizing continued needs, and refining priorities to guide future redevelopment efforts. Where key items are carried through to the 2026 Plan, the items have been underlined for ease of reference.

The CRA was originally established in 1997 and included at that time 75% of the City's boundary area. The City has grown since then through annexations and expanded City limits, and the boundary of the CRA has changed slightly since its original inception. The 2010 Plan researched small expansions of the CRA boundaries based upon the analysis of a required Finding of Necessity (FON). The CRA boundary was then expanded by 16 properties, bringing the percentage of the city which falls within CRA boundaries at 79% (below the 80% maximum threshold per F.S). The term of the CRA was also extended from the original 25 years to 30 years.



The 2010 Plan divided the CRA into four distinct geographic areas to allow for more targeted use of CRA funds for projects and improvements. The four areas included:

1. Downtown Core. Centered along Main Street, the Downtown Core was recognized for its historic character, mixed uses, traditional street network, and pedestrian-friendly design, but faced challenges such as vacant storefronts, limited leasable space for small businesses, and inadequate signage.



Key redevelopment prospects included the Coker Fuel Building, enhanced wayfinding signage, and expanded pedestrian and multimodal connections along Orange Street, 8th Avenue, and Palmetto Street.

2. North CRA. The North CRA is a primarily residential district located north of Oak Street, extending to the northern CRA boundary and including areas east and west of US 17. It features a mix of established neighborhoods and vacant or agricultural land, particularly in the northeast and northwest quadrants. The area benefits from a mature tree canopy, Oak Street Park, and proximity to downtown, but faces challenges such as limited pedestrian infrastructure, industrial-residential adjacency, minimal buffering, and aging building facades and signage.

While the North CRA offers natural assets and park space, it struggles with inadequate sidewalks, industrial encroachment, and visual blight from unscreened uses and deteriorating facades. Strategic improvements include sidewalk upgrades along Florida Avenue and Townsend Street, development of vacant land for infill housing, and the addition of neighborhood parks and gateway features to enhance community identity.

3. South CRA. The South CRA is the second main residential area of the City and includes properties south of Bay Street to approximately Stenstrom Road. Includes some properties east and west of US 17. This district features a mix of residential and non-residential uses, including medical facilities and multiple parks and recreation areas. Despite these assets, the South CRA faces several challenges, such as a lack of pedestrian infrastructure, an overconcentration of strip commercial development, deteriorating housing conditions, and concerns related to crime.

While the South CRA benefitted from medical and recreational amenities, it struggled with poor pedestrian connectivity, aging housing stock, and a prevalence of strip commercial development that detracts from neighborhood cohesion. Key improvements include sidewalk upgrades

4. East CRA/ Peace River. The area is characterized by its abundance of publicly owned land and recreational assets, with potential for future redevelopment. However, it faces challenges such as incomplete sidewalk networks, lack of utilities east of the Peace River, and insufficient screening around public works facilities.

All four of these areas were further identified and researched, including specific information regarding the location and condition of existing sidewalks, stormwater management, and water and wastewater infrastructure.



2019 PLAN OVERVIEW



2019 Wauchula Community Redevelopment Agency – Community Redevelopment Plan



The 2019 Plan presented a vision for the CRA that was developed with consideration and analysis of existing conditions within the City and CRA, and review of adopted City Plans. Building on previous plans and shaped by community input, the Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy to foster a unified, inclusive, and economically vibrant Wauchula. It is grounded in a detailed analysis of existing conditions, market trends, and stakeholder priorities, and divides the CRA into four distinct geographic areas to enable more targeted investment. Key elements of the 2019 Plan include:

- An updated Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) projections to guide future investments.
- The development of parks and recreation plans to enhance quality of life and community identity.
- Extension of the CRA's term from 2027 to 2057, ensuring long-term redevelopment efforts.
- Advancements in affordable and workforce housing, including new mixed-use developments and rehabilitation projects.
- Economic development initiatives, such as façade grants, business incentives, and partnerships with Main Street Wauchula, Inc.

Major accomplishments include brownfield redevelopment, parks improvements, entryway signage and wayfinding, and ongoing neighborhood stabilization through grant programs. The 2019 Plan emphasized responsible development, adaptive reuse, infrastructure upgrades, and the creation of vibrant public spaces. It also prioritized community engagement, market analysis, and the alignment of redevelopment activities with the city's comprehensive plan and state statutes. These efforts laid the groundwork for continued progress and set the stage for the 2026 Plan update.

3. 2026 PLAN UPDATE

INTRODUCTION

The Amended and Updated 2026 Wauchula CRA Plan was developed in partnership with the City of Wauchula and the Community Redevelopment Agency to align with the City's Comprehensive Plan and ensure compliance with Florida Statutes §163.360, §163.362, and other applicable regulations. The 2026 Plan serves as an implementation-level document that translates the goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan into targeted redevelopment strategies by directing public investment and revitalization efforts to priority areas within the CRA. Consistent with statutory requirements, the Plan documents existing conditions, establishes redevelopment objectives, and outlines focused strategies to stimulate reinvestment, improve infrastructure and public facilities, expand economic opportunity, and support compatible land use patterns. Through this update, the CRA Plan reinforces the City's long-range vision for downtown revitalization, economic development, and sustainable growth while providing a coordinated framework for capital improvements and redevelopment actions within the CRA.

Building upon the foundation established in the 2019 CRA Master Plan, the 2026 Plan Update includes three key updated elements:



1. Updated Tax Increment Financing (TIF) projections and an updated Capital Improvements Plan (CIP);
2. Identification of potential redevelopment and catalyst opportunities; and
3. Continued investment in neighborhood stabilization through CRA, state, and federally funded grant programs.

The Plan establishes a targeted, long-range framework to guide investment, redevelopment, and policy. Evolving alongside community priorities and updated in accordance with Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, the updated Plan addresses ongoing needs, remedies substandard conditions, and strengthens partner collaborations to advance strategic redevelopment and neighborhood-scale reinvestment. This Plan includes economic analysis, analysis of current and projected funding through TIF, redevelopment initiatives and programs including a CIP, and goals for the CRA. To ensure the Plan remains responsive to changing conditions and community priorities, it should be reviewed annually and updated as needed. More comprehensive evaluations and updates are recommended every five to seven years, or when significant economic, market, demographic, or redevelopment conditions warrant reassessment.

The Plan identifies targeted projects and strategies that support the CRA's redevelopment objectives and statutory purpose. Equally important, the Plan reflects a community-driven vision that has been informed by stakeholder input, public investment priorities, and ongoing redevelopment efforts occurring throughout the City.

Development of the 2026 Plan included a review of numerous adopted plans, studies, and policy documents, including the City of Wauchula Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Regulations, City of Wauchula most recent Capital Improvements Program, limited CRA Market Assessment and socio-economic analysis (prepared by Kimley-Horn), Downtown Wauchula Market Study & Vision Plan (commissioned by others in partnership with the City), Parks Master Plan, and other relevant planning initiatives. These documents provided the foundation for identifying redevelopment opportunities, establishing priorities, and ensuring consistency with the City's long-term vision.

Additionally, the 2026 Plan includes baseline socio-economic and demographic data for the City as a whole prepared by Jessica Rossi, AICP (Kimley-Horn). Overall, the City has experienced a slight population decline since 2010, with an average annual population change of approximately -0.5 percent; see also Socio-Economic and Demographic Data for a snapshot below. As illustrated below, the City of Wauchula has experienced little to no population growth as a whole and has experienced some level of downward shift in population since 2010. Residents of the CRA tend to be younger than the County as a whole and also has a slightly larger persons per household size than the County. When compared to Hardee County, the CRA experiences a lower median age of approximately 32 years old as compared to 37 in the County. These numbers tend to reflect a younger population as compared to other communities in this portion of the State. This may also be attributed to a growing active adult/retiree population locating to the County. The CRA also has a higher rate of owner-occupied housing at 52.4%, indicating more established residential trends and less dependency on rental properties.



SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISON

Wauchula CRA	 4,861 2025 ESTIMATED POPULATION	 32.2 MEDIAN AGE	 46.1% RESIDENTS AGED 25-64 (PRIME WORKING YEARS)	 82.8 DIVERSITY INDEX
	 -0.50% ANNUAL GROWTH RATE SINCE 2010	 52.4% % OWNER HOUSEHOLDS	 2.88 AVG. HH SIZE	 14.4% % ADULTS WITH BACHELOR'S DEGREE+
Hardee County	 25,184 2025 ESTIMATED POPULATION	 37.7 MEDIAN AGE	 49.2% RESIDENTS AGED 25-64 (PRIME WORKING YEARS)	 80.5 DIVERSITY INDEX
	 -0.60% ANNUAL GROWTH RATE SINCE 2010	 38.9% % OWNER HOUSEHOLDS	 2.78 AVG. HH SIZE	 13.9% % ADULTS WITH BACHELOR'S DEGREE+

ECONOMIC COMPARISON

Wauchula CRA	 339 BUSINESSES	 21.6% LARGEST SECTOR: GOVERNMENT	 31.7% WHITE COLLAR OCCUPATION	 57.9% HH EARNING LESS THAN \$50K ANNUALLY
	 2,647 JOBS	 54.5 EMPLOYEE/ POPULATION RATIO	 \$36,272 MEDIAN HH INCOME	 4.6% UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
Hardee County	 754 BUSINESSES	 19.9% LARGEST SECTOR: GOVERNMENT	 42.4% WHITE COLLAR OCCUPATION	 42.5% HH EARNING LESS THAN \$50K ANNUALLY
	 6,934 JOBS	 27.5 EMPLOYEE/ POPULATION RATIO	 \$59,071 MEDIAN HH INCOME	 5.9% UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

HOUSING COMPARISON

Wauchula CRA	 1,859 HOUSING UNITS	 \$104,514 MEDIAN HOME VALUE	 5.8% HOMES VALUED OVER \$400,000	 40.1% RENTER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS
	 1979 MEDIAN YEAR BUILT	 20.2% HOMES BUILT AFTER 2000	 59.2% % OF SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING UNITS	% of Multi-Family Housing icon" data-bbox="715 735 755 765"/> 34.0% % OF MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING
Hardee County	 10,183 HOUSING UNITS	 \$129,400 MEDIAN HOME VALUE	 8.7% HOMES VALUED OVER \$400,000	 23.8% RENTER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS
	 1985 MEDIAN YEAR BUILT	 25.0% HOMES BUILT AFTER 2000	 60.2% % OF SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING UNITS	% of Multi-Family Housing icon" data-bbox="715 835 755 865"/> 10.5% % OF MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The CRA has experienced a period of significant investment and implementation both public and private, resulting in the completion of several transformative projects and programs throughout the redevelopment area. During this time, the CRA continued to advance the vision established in the 2019 Community Redevelopment Plan while furthering the objectives of community redevelopment as outlined in Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes. These efforts including those undertaken by the CRA's partners including the IDA/TDG were achieved through the efforts and contributions of the City, CRA, MSW, IDA, other public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private sector investment.

Building upon a foundation of prior successes, the CRA has continued to make strategic investments that enhance economic development, transportation, community character, and quality of life. These efforts have complemented and expanded upon earlier initiatives, including the Town Center Parking Lot, downtown wayfinding and gateway signage improvements along U.S. 17, Heritage Park enhancements and associated parking improvements, and the successful public-private redevelopment of the former Coker Fuel Building. Collectively, these investments have strengthened the CRA and the City of Wauchula, improved public infrastructure, and positioned the community for continued revitalization and long-term economic growth. The following are specific accomplishments that have occurred as part of the CRA's enhanced planning and implementation programs established in the 2009 and subsequent Plans.



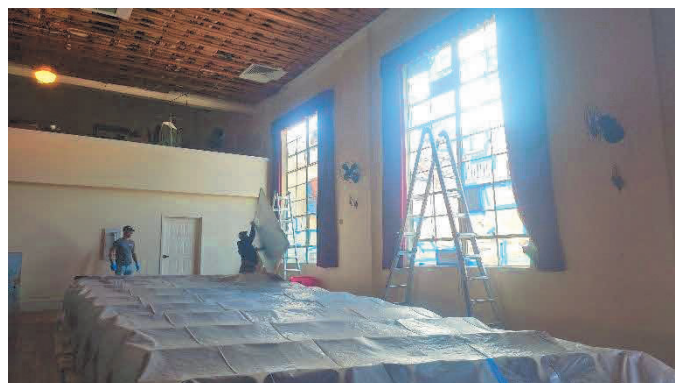
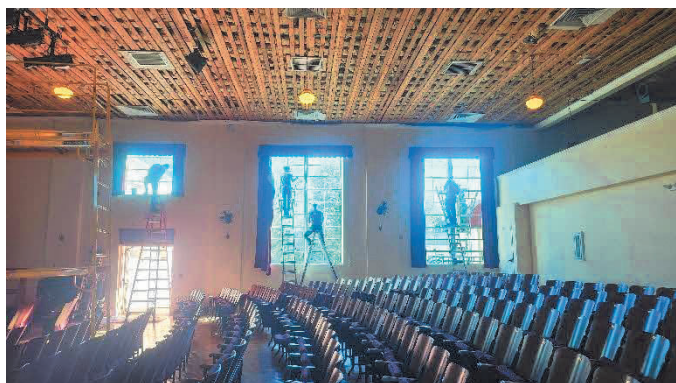
HISTORIC AUDITORIUM RENOVATIONS

The Wauchula CRA has long prioritized the revitalization of the City's historic City Hall auditorium, first identified as a catalyst project in the 2010 CRA Master Plan. This priority continued in the 2019 Master Plan Update under Cultural & Recreational Resources, which emphasized partnering with local organizations to bring cultural programming and activities back into the historic auditorium.

Over the years, incremental improvements supported efforts to restore this once-thriving theater. Significant momentum occurred in 2022 when the CRA received a \$300,000 contribution from Mosaic, followed by the award of a Historic Preservation Grant later that same year.

Using the Mosaic funding, the CRA issued an RFP for the installation of a modern audio/visual system, including a new movie projector and screen, speakers, monitors, a sound board, and stage lighting. These upgrades were intended to enhance performances, reactivate a theater group, attract visiting performers, and elevate the quality of film and event programming. Work on the A/V system started in June 2023 and was complete in April of 2024.

The Historic Preservation Grant, awarded in July 2022, supported additional structural and accessibility improvements. These included renovation of the auditorium ceiling, refurbishment of the historic windows, and the creation of both front- and rear-stage accessibility, including improvements to backstage restrooms and dressing rooms. Construction for these components was completed in 2026.



Together, these investments represented major steps toward restoring the historic auditorium as a cultural anchor for downtown Wauchula and a vital community gathering space.

COKER FUEL

The Coker Fuel property (often designated as a key Catalyst Site or targeted redevelopment parcel in downtown) was identified for adaptive reuse and environmental remediation to eliminate blighting influences and activate industrial/commercial corridors. Given its historic industrial/fuel distribution use, the plan highlights the site as a priority for Brownfield assessment, environmental testing, and cleanup funding to prepare the parcel for safe re-use. The property was targeted in part due to its strategic location near the core district and was acquired providing an opportunity aimed at spurring private investment, transforming a former light-industrial eyesore into an active community asset (such as commercial, light industrial/maker space, or mixed-use redevelopment). Redevelopment of this property also served as a vital component of the Main Street visual corridor enhancement, improving edge conditions between industrial zones and the surrounding commercial/downtown district while strengthening connectivity to key transport links.

Public-Private Partnership Focus: The plan framework positioned the site for CRA incentive deployment (e.g., facade/site improvement grants, infrastructure assistance) to attract private developers capable of revitalizing the footprint.

PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS



Parking has remained a consistent focus of both the CRA and the City since adoption of the 2010 CRA Plan. Overall, walkability and proximity to parking are generally considered acceptable, with most downtown parking areas located within a short and convenient walking distance of businesses. However, the Market Study identified concerns specific to on-street parking along Main Street, noting that the placement of concrete planters creates both physical and visual barriers that discourage use of these spaces due to concerns about potential vehicle damage. A key recommendation carried forward into this Master Plan is to pursue a “refresh” of the Main Street corridor, including evaluating opportunities to redesign or remove the existing concrete barriers to improve functionality, visibility, and overall downtown usability.

As noted in the Market Study, the City initiated a milling and resurfacing project along East Main Street (SR 636) to address pavement conditions and enhance the downtown streetscape. In addition, the Wauchula Community Redevelopment Agency completed parking improvements at the intersection of US-17 and Main Street, including construction of approximately 34,000 square feet of asphalt parking area along with associated lighting and landscaping enhancements.

In 2021, the City of Wauchula entered into an agreement with the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) for the conveyance of IDA-owned property along Highway 17 North, just north of Main Street. Under the agreement, the CRA committed to developing a public parking lot on the site, with one-third of the spaces reserved for IDA use. As part of this partnership, the City and IDA jointly submitted a Job Creation Grant application to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity based on employment generated by R. Riveter, which was awarded in 2021. Construction began in September 2023 and resulted in 66 additional downtown parking spaces, supplemented with enhanced lighting and landscaping.



Collectively, the CRA's ongoing Parking Lot Enhancement Projects support the long-term Transportation and Mobility goals of the 2019 CRA Master Plan Update, which call for continued monitoring of downtown parking conditions and evaluation of parking capacity, facility design, placement, signage, accessibility, and overall functionality. These improvements support the CRA's ongoing planning efforts to ensure parking resources remain convenient, well designed, and supportive of redevelopment activity within the downtown area. These investments represent critical infrastructure improvements that enhance accessibility, support business activity, and improve the overall functionality and economic vitality of downtown Wauchula.



DOWNTOWN MARKET STUDY & VISION PLAN

In 2025, Wauchula completed a Downtown Market Study & Vision Plan to guide the revitalization of its historic downtown. The study was funded through a grant from the Florida Heartland Economic Region of Opportunity (FHRO) awarded to The Development Group and was spearheaded by Main Street Wauchula. The City, Hardee County, FHRO, and other community partners participated in the planning process and helped shape the resulting vision and recommendations. This initiative brought together Main Street Wauchula, the City, Hardee County, The Development Group, and FHRO to create a practical, action-oriented strategy for economic growth and community development.



The planning process was rooted in extensive community engagement, including surveys, stakeholder interviews, and roundtable discussions. Residents and business owners expressed strong pride in downtown's character and history, but also highlighted challenges such as vacant buildings, inconsistent business hours, and the need for more retail and dining options. The study's market analysis confirmed significant unmet demand in categories like restaurants, specialty food and beverage, apparel, and wellness-oriented retail, with over \$87 million in annual retail leakage identified within the local trade area.

Physical improvements in recent years such as streetscape upgrades, parking enhancements, and public amenities—have laid a solid foundation for further investment. However, the

study also identified ongoing challenges, including code compliance issues, visual clutter, and pedestrian safety concerns, particularly along Highway 17. Recommendations were made to refine land development codes, encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings, and streamline approval processes to make downtown more attractive for new businesses and investors.

The Downtown Market Study & Vision Plan identified several key sites in Wauchula's historic core that offer significant potential for redevelopment and economic growth. Among these, the plan highlights opportunities for the adaptive reuse of 217 East Main Street for residential and educational purposes and the transformation of 121-125 West Main Street into a micro-retail emporium. Additional concepts include activating vacant buildings for new restaurants, mixed-use housing and office space, and establishing a brewery or maker hall to serve as a destination for both locals and visitors. These sites were selected for their strategic locations, existing infrastructure, and ability to catalyze further investment and activity downtown. Each development concept is designed to address specific community needs and market opportunities, such as increasing foot traffic, expanding dining and retail options, and providing new housing and business spaces. The plan emphasizes a mix of uses, hospitality, retail, residential, and entertainment to create a vibrant, walkable downtown environment. By focusing on these target sites and supporting them with incentives, streamlined approvals, and public-private partnerships, Wauchula is positioned to attract new investment, foster entrepreneurship, and enhance the overall quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

This Plan also pinpointed several key sites for redevelopment, including a proposed downtown hotel, new residential and educational uses, micro-retail spaces, and a brewery or maker hall. These projects are designed to catalyze additional investment and create a more vibrant, walkable downtown. To bridge the gap between large-scale projects and everyday



improvements, the plan also emphasized tactical interventions such as enhanced crosswalks, public art, facade grants, and creative uses for vacant storefronts. These strategies aim to boost downtown's appeal, support small businesses, and build confidence among investors and the community.

The completion of the Downtown Market Study & Vision Plan marked a significant milestone in Wauchula's ongoing revitalization efforts. Through robust community engagement, detailed market analysis, and strategic partnerships, the city now has a clear, actionable roadmap for strengthening its downtown core. The plan identifies both immediate opportunities and long-term strategies to attract investment, support local businesses, and enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors. By focusing on targeted redevelopment sites, improving the physical environment, and leveraging incentives, Wauchula is well-positioned to build on its recent successes and continue transforming downtown into a vibrant, welcoming destination for the entire community. Two example projects identified in the Plan included 206 West Palmetto, a phased mixed-use development, and George Burris Avenue / 5th Avenue Alley.

- 206 West Palmetto. The 206 West Palmetto concept proposes phased reuse of a vacant 15,400-square-foot building, starting with residential units and adding office space once the initial phase stabilizes, allowing a local developer to manage risk while building equity. The analysis shows that sequencing or modest public incentives can turn an otherwise infeasible project into a viable catalyst, bringing housing and jobs downtown and demonstrating how small investments can unlock full building reuse.
- George Burris Avenue / 5th Avenue. The George Burris Avenue / Fifth Avenue Alley catalyst reimagines an existing downtown street as a shared community space, using low-cost placemaking elements such as lighting, art, seating, and flexible closures to create an active corridor rather than just a pass-through. By enhancing what already works, the concept strengthens first impressions, supports adjacent businesses, and establishes a people-focused public realm that can host daily activity and special events in the heart of downtown.

Additionally, this Plan, developed in coordination with CRA staff, identifies three additional catalyst sites, with corresponding concept plans outlined in Chapter 8, Catalyst Sites.

PARKS

The Parks Master Plan was a major component of the 2019 CRA Plan and recognized the important role parks and recreational facilities play in advancing community redevelopment objectives. The Plan identified strategic investments in parks and open spaces as opportunities to enhance quality of life, strengthen community identity, support economic development, and improve the overall attractiveness of the CRA and Hardee County.

The Plan emphasized that parks and recreational facilities serve as more than community amenities; they function as catalysts for revitalization by providing gathering spaces, enhancing environmental sustainability, and supporting long-term economic growth. Investments in parks were identified as a means to:

- Strengthen community identity by providing accessible public spaces that bring together residents of all ages and backgrounds.
- Enhance environmental resilience through urban greening, shade creation, stormwater management, and other natural infrastructure benefits.
- Support economic development by increasing surrounding property values, attracting visitors, and encouraging investment in adjacent properties and neighborhoods.



- Improve quality of life and community well-being through expanded recreational opportunities, public gathering spaces, and long-term community benefits.

The Parks Master Plan has successfully guided several park redevelopment efforts, implementing the vision of the Plan into tangible community improvements. The CRA has invested both its own funds and grant funding to support park improvements throughout the City. A notable achievement is the completion of Parks at Peace River, which exemplifies the CRA's commitment to enhancing livability and advancing long-term revitalization goals. Additionally, several significant park enhancements identified in the Parks Master Plan and Farr Field Park have been implemented. Detailed descriptions of these projects are provided in Chapter 10: Neighborhood Impact and Affordable Housing. Separate from the Parks Master Plan, improvements at Heritage Park, including the installation of hanging plants and the introduction of seasonal banners, have contributed to a more vibrant community atmosphere, helping to position downtown Wauchula as an active and inviting destination for both residents and visitors.

In contrast, Seminole Park, originally identified in the 2019 Plan, has not been constructed. Since adoption of the 2019 Plan, the site has been reevaluated and is no longer planned for park development. The Plan has been amended to reflect a change in land use for the Seminole Park site, which has been redesignated for infill residential development. This decision followed a comprehensive reevaluation that considered the site's proximity to other recreational facilities, particularly Farr Field Park, and a demonstrated community need for additional housing in the area.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

MAIN STREET WAUCHULA, INC. (MSW)

The CRA maintains a strategic partnership with Main Street Wauchula, Inc. (MSW), which serves as a key implementation entity for redevelopment and revitalization efforts within the CRA District. Pursuant to an interlocal agreement among the CRA, the City of Wauchula, and Hardee County, tax increment revenues may be utilized to support marketing initiatives, arts programming, and community events that promote visitation, economic activity, and reinvestment within the CRA District. Through this partnership, MSW advances downtown revitalization efforts through business development, historic preservation, community engagement, placemaking activities, and special events consistent with the objectives of the Florida Main Street Program and the CRA Redevelopment Plan.

The 2019 Plan identified continued cooperation with the non-profit MSW as an essential strategy for advancing economic development and promoting businesses within the CRA district. This partnership has consistently proven successful, supported by aligned organizational goals, strong volunteer engagement, collaboration with downtown businesses, and active involvement from local government.

MSW maintains both a Main Street America accreditation and a Florida Main Street designation, demonstrating its commitment to preserving and revitalizing the historic downtown core. Over multiple years, the organization has played a central role in strengthening economic vitality, enhancing public engagement, and promoting the cultural identity of downtown Wauchula. Key accomplishments over the reporting periods included:



- **Extensive Volunteer Support:** Between the reported years, volunteers contributed more than 2,300 hours to activities that promoted downtown businesses, beautified public spaces, supported events, strengthened community pride, and celebrated local history.
- **Business Support & Investment:** MSW awarded over \$13,000 in grants to assist downtown businesses, provided design assistance to property owners, and launched initiatives such as “We’re Open on Saturdays” and social media campaigns to increase visibility and foot traffic.
- **Major Community Events:** The organization hosted large-scale events drawing thousands of visitors downtown, including the Wildcat Tailgate Party, Fall Festival, Hometown Christmas, and Shop Small Saturday, which repeatedly generated significant increases in sales and customer traffic for local businesses.
- **Regular Downtown Programming:** Ongoing activities such as Open Mic Nights, Palooza in the Park, and various in-store promotional events fostered community engagement and supported participating businesses.
- **Youth and Entrepreneurial Development:** The Student Business Fair expanded annually, supporting between 25–35 young vendors and nurturing local entrepreneurial skills.
- **Cultural & Historic Preservation:** Efforts included the Veteran Banner Program, Student Art Banner Program, annual Historic Ghost Tour, and progress on historic preservation grants—such as ranking among the top applicants statewide for support to the Hardee County Trust Building.
- **Facility Enhancements:** Projects included the acquisition of 250+ auditorium seat cushions for the Historic City Auditorium and other improvements supporting public use and events.

Collectively, these achievements highlight the effectiveness of the CRA’s partnership with MSW in advancing economic development, strengthening the downtown business district, and enhancing the cultural vibrancy of the CRA area.

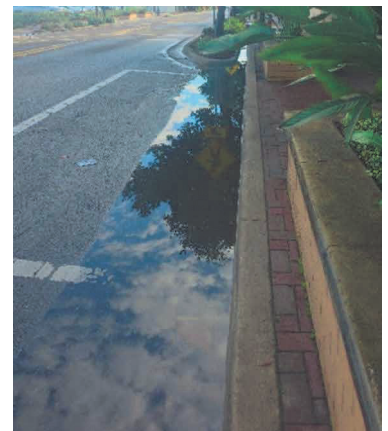
The CRA, City of Wauchula, Hardee County, and Main Street Wauchula should continue coordinating on an extension of their partnership agreement to build upon the success of ongoing redevelopment initiatives and community investments. Extending this partnership will support the continued implementation of projects, enhance opportunities to leverage additional funding and resources, and strengthen connections to community assets that contribute to the long-term vitality of the CRA District and the broader Wauchula community.

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

The following projects are understood to be in the planning and/or development phases by various entities, including private development groups, The Development Group (TDG), Hardee County, and others. Collectively, these initiatives are anticipated to have a significant positive impact on both the City and the CRA. The projects range from redevelopment efforts to alleyway and streetscape enhancements and are identified below. It should be noted that all information, including plans, sketches, and conceptual materials, has been provided by the respective developers and was not prepared, proposed, or designed by Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. as part of this Plan.

FDEP RECOMMENDATION

The City and CRA have coordinated with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) on redevelopment efforts, including addressing persistent stormwater and drainage issues along Main Street. Existing conditions indicate that a segment of Main



Street, from the mid-block alley west to 7th Avenue, experiences significant ponding, particularly along the south side of the roadway. In response, FDEP provided conceptual renderings illustrating green infrastructure strategies, including the use of permeable paving materials supplemented by bioswales to improve drainage and water flow.

DOWNTOWN CORE PROJECTS

The Industrial Development Authority (IDA), doing business as The Development Group (TDG), advances economic development and redevelopment initiatives throughout the community. For clarity and consistency, the organization is referred to as TDG throughout this Plan. TDG has developed several projects within the downtown core that support redevelopment, economic development, and revitalization efforts within the CRA.

Current initiatives include the Downtown Alleyway and Parking Improvements Project, which will enhance pedestrian connectivity, improve accessibility, and modernize public parking facilities within the downtown core. TDG is also developing Gardens at Midtown, a residential project that will introduce new townhouse development along 8th Avenue while expanding parking resources to support nearby businesses and residents. In addition, the



Multipurpose Facility at 217 E. Main Street will provide office and business incubator space designed to support entrepreneurship, small business growth, and workforce development opportunities. Together, these projects represent strategic investments that strengthen downtown's residential, commercial, and public infrastructure assets while supporting long-term economic vitality and redevelopment within the CRA District.

Together, these projects are intended to activate the area, complement surrounding uses, and provide adequate additional parking to support downtown activity. In addition, conceptual alleyway improvements illustrate opportunities to increase pedestrian activity and create an additional desirable public space.

4. CRA GOALS

1. Promote strategic redevelopment that incorporates family-friendly public spaces and advances the implementation of identified catalyst site concepts.
 - Prioritize CRA recommended projects and identify potential funding sources for initiatives outlined in the Downtown Market Study and Vision Plan, as well as the 2019 Market Assessment prepared by Kimley-Horn. Limited concepts from the Vision Plan have been incorporated into the CRA Master Plan to provide consistency and continuity in planning and redevelopment efforts across multiple partnerships and concepts identified as part of this Plan.



- Advance a balanced approach to implementation by pursuing both larger, long-term catalytic projects and smaller-scale, lower-cost initiatives, including select catalyst sites beyond those identified in the respective studies previously discussed and three (3) additional potential catalytic projects which include the Water Tower Site, 111 E Bay Street (Electric Substation/Food Truck Park), and 106 Main Street further described and discussed in *Section 8 Catalyst Sites* of this Plan. The Water Tower Site and 111 Bay Street are relatively low-cost projects which can be provided in the short-term and build community momentum while providing targeted public spaces.
 - Seeking opportunities for collaboration with TDG, private developers, nonprofit organizations, and other public and private partners to leverage funding, investment, and organizational resources that advance redevelopment projects, expand economic opportunities, and support the long-term vitality of the CRA District.
2. Encourage commercial redevelopment along the U.S. 17 corridor, a priority redevelopment area, and support the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties within the Redevelopment Area through strategic commercial investment, adaptive reuse, and public private partnerships.
 3. Encourage adaptive reuse and redevelopment of historic and underutilized buildings.
 - Support public-private partnerships as a key tool for delivering transformative redevelopment projects within the CRA.
 4. Support implementation efforts that integrate drainage and infrastructure improvements to create a safer, more walkable, and better connected through public-private partnerships and redevelopment.
 - Build on the TDG alleyway project, and application FDEP drainage recommendations for Main Street, including coordinated mid-block stormwater management solutions that enhance pedestrian connectivity and support redevelopment.
 - Support drainage and infrastructure improvements throughout the Redevelopment Area to enhance connectivity, improve public safety, address existing infrastructure needs, and facilitate redevelopment and reinvestment within the CRA.
 5. Expand placemaking initiatives that strengthen Wauchula's community identity, civic presence, and public life through investment in inviting public facilities, public spaces, gathering areas, and other community amenities throughout the Redevelopment Area.
 - Downtown Core: Reinforce downtown as the civic and cultural heart of the community by capitalizing on key catalyst opportunities, including the proposed library and senior center site and other public or semipublic facilities and spaces.
 - Placemaking and Community Character: Support public, private, and nonprofit partnerships that advance transformative placemaking projects, including alleyway improvements, Main Street Wauchula's mural program, streetscape enhancements, public art, gathering spaces, and other improvements that strengthen community character, connectivity, and sense of place.
 6. Continue to prioritize the provision of additional public parking within the downtown core.
 - Ensure parking resources support existing businesses, future development, and identified catalyst sites while sustaining redevelopment momentum.
 7. Support residential development and redevelopment that increases housing opportunities within the CRA, with a particular emphasis on workforce housing serving teachers, healthcare workers, first responders, and similar occupations.
 8. Support marketing, the arts, and community events held in the CRA district under an interlocal agreement with the city and the county as allowed by F.S. 163.01.



9. Advance strategic redevelopment opportunities through property acquisition, public-private partnerships, and targeted investment that address redevelopment needs, encourage private investment, and improve the overall quality, appearance, and vitality of the Redevelopment Area.
 - Strategic Opportunities: Identify properties, sites, and improvement opportunities where CRA involvement can serve as a catalyst for redevelopment, improve connectivity, support community-serving uses, address redevelopment needs, or leverage additional public and private investment.
 - Neighborhood and Community Improvements: Support beautification, cleanup, property enhancement, and neighborhood improvement initiatives that address conditions of blight and contribute to attractive, accessible, and well-maintained areas within the Redevelopment Area.
 - Partnership and Investment: Collaborate with property owners, businesses, governmental entities, nonprofit organizations, and other community partners to leverage resources and advance projects that further the goals and objectives of the Redevelopment Plan
10. Leverage public-private partnerships (P3s) to advance catalytic redevelopment, community facilities, public spaces, and infrastructure improvements by combining public resources with private investment, expertise, and implementation capacity to achieve community goals that may not be feasible through CRA funding alone.

6. TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) PROJECTIONS

TIF GENERALLY

Tax increment financing (TIF) provides most of the funding for the Wauchula CRA. The Wauchula CRA was established in 1997, which is considered to be the “base year” of the CRA’s TIF. F.S. 163.387 outlines the criteria for redevelopment trust funds and how CRAs must utilize their funding. As required by Florida Statutes, the base rates and a portion of any increases are directed to the general fund for both the City and County, and a portion of any increases in taxes beyond the base year for the properties within the CRA are provided to the redevelopment fund. This makes appreciating property assists and increasing property values very appealing for a CRA, as the increase in taxable property values increases the redevelopment fund, which allows for further redevelopment projects.

Raising money through TIF means that all monies used in redevelopment activities are locally generated and may be locally dispersed through the decisions made by the CRA itself. Community Redevelopment Agencies are not overseen by the State of Florida; this provides a CRA a unique strength to decide how to spend monies in its boundary. Redevelopment plans, however, must be consistent with local government comprehensive plans and the monies raised must be used in the boundary of the CRA. Consistent with the statutes, funds are deposited to a trust fund by the taxing entities (the City and County), after monies are received from the tax collector’s office. The revenues can be used immediately as they are received to undertake programs, capital projects, or planning studies that serve the community redevelopment area. These funds may also be saved for a particular project or be bonded to maximize the funds available. This is something the CRA currently has listed as a goal; to further explore the use of bonding for future projects to maximize funds available. All monies and funds received from the TIF area must be reinvested back into the targeted area, specific to redevelopment purposes and programs, and not used for general government purposes.

The TIF projections contained in this Plan are subject to potential changes resulting from future state or legislative action related to homestead properties.



WAUCHULA TIF AND PROPERTY VALUES

Historical TIF growth within the Wauchula CRA has generally reflected broader economic conditions, including periods of slower growth associated with national economic downturns and more recent recovery trends. As reflected in historical revenue data, TIF revenues increased steadily in recent years, with total revenues reaching approximately \$1.4 million in FY 2024. This growth is driven by increases in taxable property values within the CRA, supported by ongoing public and private investment. Since establishment of the CRA in 1997, total taxable value has increased significantly, rising from approximately \$48.6 million in the base year to over \$163 million in FY 2024.

The City of Wauchula and Hardee County both contribute to the CRA trust fund, with revenues generated from incremental increases in property values above the established base year. Recent trends indicate continued growth in both City and County contributions, reflecting strengthening market conditions and reinvestment within the CRA. Targeted public investments, including downtown improvements, park enhancements, and redevelopment initiatives identified in recent planning efforts, are expected to further support increases in assessed value and long-term TIF revenue growth.

PROPERTY USES

As part of this assessment, existing land uses for the 1,697 properties within the CRA, as identified by the Hardee County Property Appraiser, were analyzed for the period from 2020 through 2025. The purpose of this analysis, summarized in *Existing Property Use 2020-2025 Table*, is to illustrate how different land use categories have contributed to overall value growth over time and to identify uses that may be driving or lagging in assessed value.

This analysis should be considered within the context of the uneven distribution of land uses throughout the CRA, as well as the dominant role residential properties play within the district. Residential uses constitute the majority of parcels in the CRA, including 1,035 single-family parcels, 101 vacant residential parcels, and 82 multifamily parcels with fewer than ten units. While residential uses remain a critical component of the CRA, this analysis intentionally highlights nonresidential land uses due to their importance in supporting employment, market activity, and long-term revenue generation.

Within the CRA, vacant commercial properties account for 75 parcels, representing significant opportunities for adaptive reuse and reinvestment. In addition, one-story retail stores comprise 45 parcels and experienced an average assessed value increase of approximately 50 percent between 2020 and 2025, reinforcing market interest in commercial utilization and growth within the area. These trends help inform strategies to encourage additional and complementary nonresidential uses that can further strengthen economic activity within the district. A more detailed assessment of assessed value trends from 2020 to 2025 is provided in the Existing Property Use (2020–2025) table.

TABLE OF EXISTING LAND USE 2020-2025

Existing Land Use (in 2025)	Average of AV% Change from 2020 to 2025	# Parcels
Auto sales, auto repair and storage, auto service shops, body and fender shops, commercial garages, farm and machinery sales and services, auto rental, marine equipment, trailers and related equipment, mobile home sales, motorcycles, construction vehicle	55%	8
Churches	36%	35
Clubs, lodges, union halls	41%	3
Community Shopping Centers	36%	3
Counties (other than public schools, colleges, hospitals) including non-municipal government	73091%	28
Cropland soil capability Class I	-83%	2
Drive-in Restaurants	34%	3
Federal, other than military, forests, parks, recreational areas, hospitals, colleges	61%	1
Financial institutions (banks, saving and loan companies, mortgage companies, credit services)	34%	5
Grazing land soil capability Class II	2%	7
Homes for the aged	82%	2
Hotels, motels	175%	1
Insurance company offices	48%	1
Light manufacturing, small equipment manufacturing plants, small machine shops, instrument manufacturing, printing plants	31%	1
Lumber yards, sawmills, planing mills	23%	1
Miscellaneous Residential (migrant camps, boarding homes, etc.)	66%	2
Mixed use - store and office or store and residential combination	132%	17
Mobile Homes	79%	49
Mortuaries, cemeteries, crematoriums	92%	7
Multi-family - 10 units or more	48%	10
Multi-family - fewer than 10 units	102%	82
Municipal, other than parks, recreational areas, colleges, hospitals	57%	45
Nightclubs, cocktail lounges, bars	148%	1
Office buildings, non-professional service buildings, multi-story	14%	1
Office buildings, non-professional service buildings, one story	39%	28
Orchard Groves, citrus, etc.	-28%	2
Orphanages, other non-profit or charitable services	94%	5
Other food processing, candy factories, bakeries, potato chip factories	32%	1
Parking lots (commercial or patron), mobile home parks	10%	1
Private schools and colleges	57%	10
Privately owned hospitals	-2%	3
Professional service buildings	7228014%	19
Public county schools - including all property of Board of Public Instruction	20%	7
Repair service shops (excluding automotive), radio and T.V. repair, refrigeration service, electric repair, laundries, Laundromats	57%	15
Restaurants, cafeterias	58%	9
Retirement Homes not eligible for exemption	55%	1
Right-of-way, streets, roads, irrigation channel, ditch, etc.	0%	1
Single Family	70987%	1035
State, other than military, forests, parks, recreational areas, colleges, hospitals	8%	4
Stores, one story	50%	45
Utility, gas and electricity, telephone and telegraph, locally assessed railroads, water and sewer service, pipelines, canals, radio/television communication	34%	3
Vacant Commercial	3912600%	75
Vacant Governmental	0%	4
Vacant Industrial	10%	1
Vacant Residential	91902%	101
Warehousing, distribution terminals, trucking terminals, van and storage warehousing	52%	6
(blank)	-33%	6
Total Number of Parcels		1697

The map below provides a visual overview of assessed value changes within the CRA from 2020 through 2025. An accompanying map illustrates parcel-level growth patterns, categorizing properties by growth rates of less than 3 percent, 3 to 6 percent, 6 to 10 percent, and greater than 10 percent. *Table Assessed Values Percent Change of Properties 2020-2025* below summarizes the number of properties within each of these growth categories.

MAP 4: CHANGES IN ASSESSED VALUES

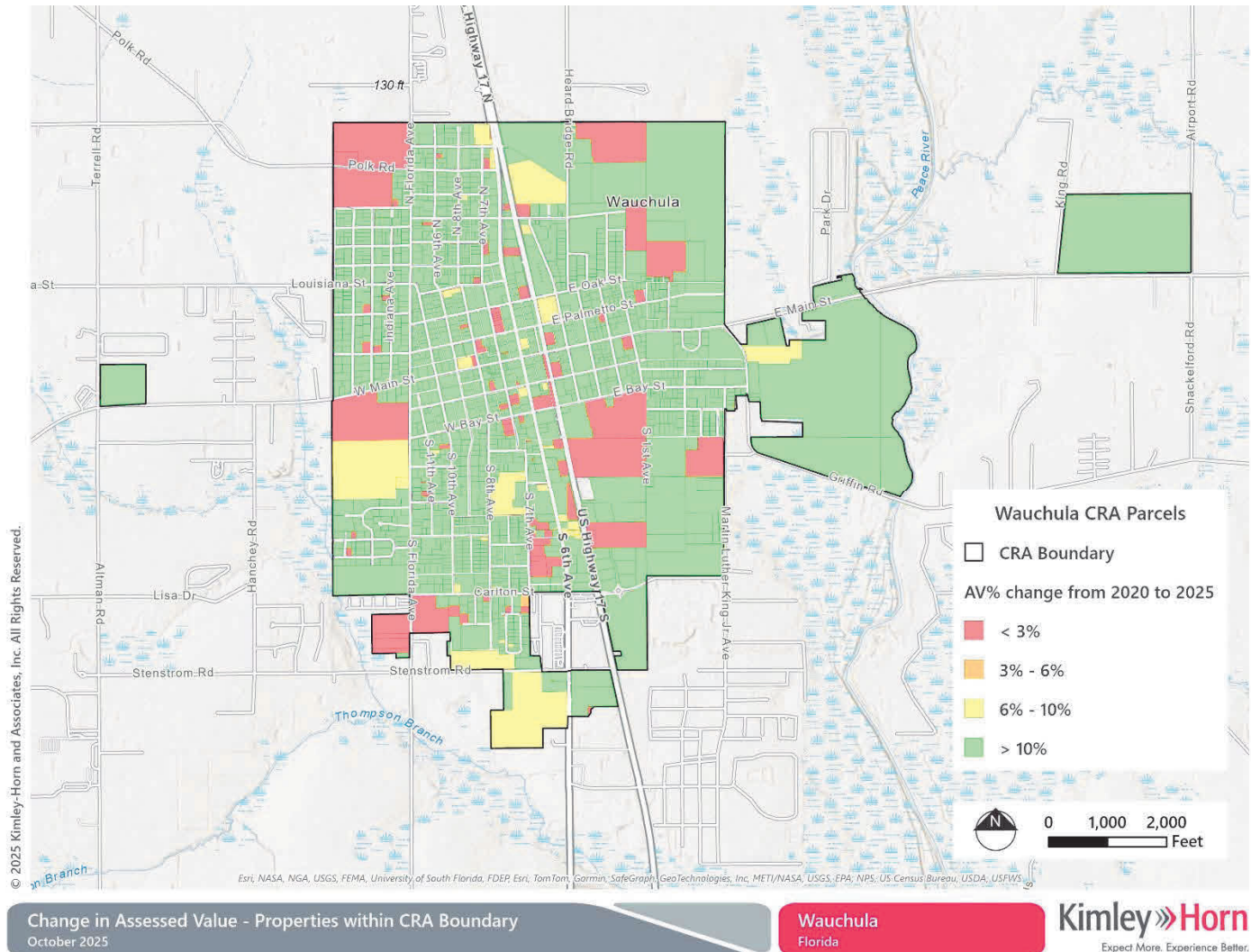


TABLE OF ASSESSED VALUES PERCENT CHANGE OF PROPERTIES 2020-2025

Percent Change	Number of Properties
< 3%	88
3% - 6%	1
6% -10%	31
>10%	1577



TAXABLE VALUE AND REVENUE PROJECTIONS

A ten-year taxable value and revenue projection has been prepared for the CRA Master Plan through FY 2035 with additional “visionary” projections through the term of the CRA (FY 2026). These projections assume modest growth (rate of natural increase) and where possible, have included information and projections that take into consideration one or more of the catalyst projects, projects identified in the Market Study and or those in partnership with The Development Group. Projections are for planning purposes only and are not intended to provide certain assurances or expectations as to the TIF Revenues received during the term of the CRA. It is further understood that the TIF Projections are modest to capture potential changes in economic conditions.

Based on historical trends and anticipated redevelopment activity, TIF revenue projections were developed assuming annual growth rates of 4.5 percent, 4.75 percent, and 5 percent. These projections are intended for planning purposes only and reflect moderate scenarios based on existing market conditions and anticipated reinvestment within the CRA.

Under the 4.5 percent growth scenario, annual TIF revenues are projected to increase from approximately \$1.46 million in FY25 to nearly \$2.3 million by FY35. The 4.75 percent growth scenario projects revenues reaching approximately \$2.35 million by FY35, representing a moderate growth trajectory between the lower and upper projection ranges. Under the 5 percent growth scenario, annual TIF revenues are projected to reach approximately \$2.4 million by FY35, reflecting a more accelerated growth pattern associated with successful implementation of catalyst projects, continued private investment, and strengthening market conditions within the CRA.

These projections do not account for major changes in CRA boundaries, reassessment practices, or significant external economic shifts, and should be updated periodically to reflect actual market conditions.

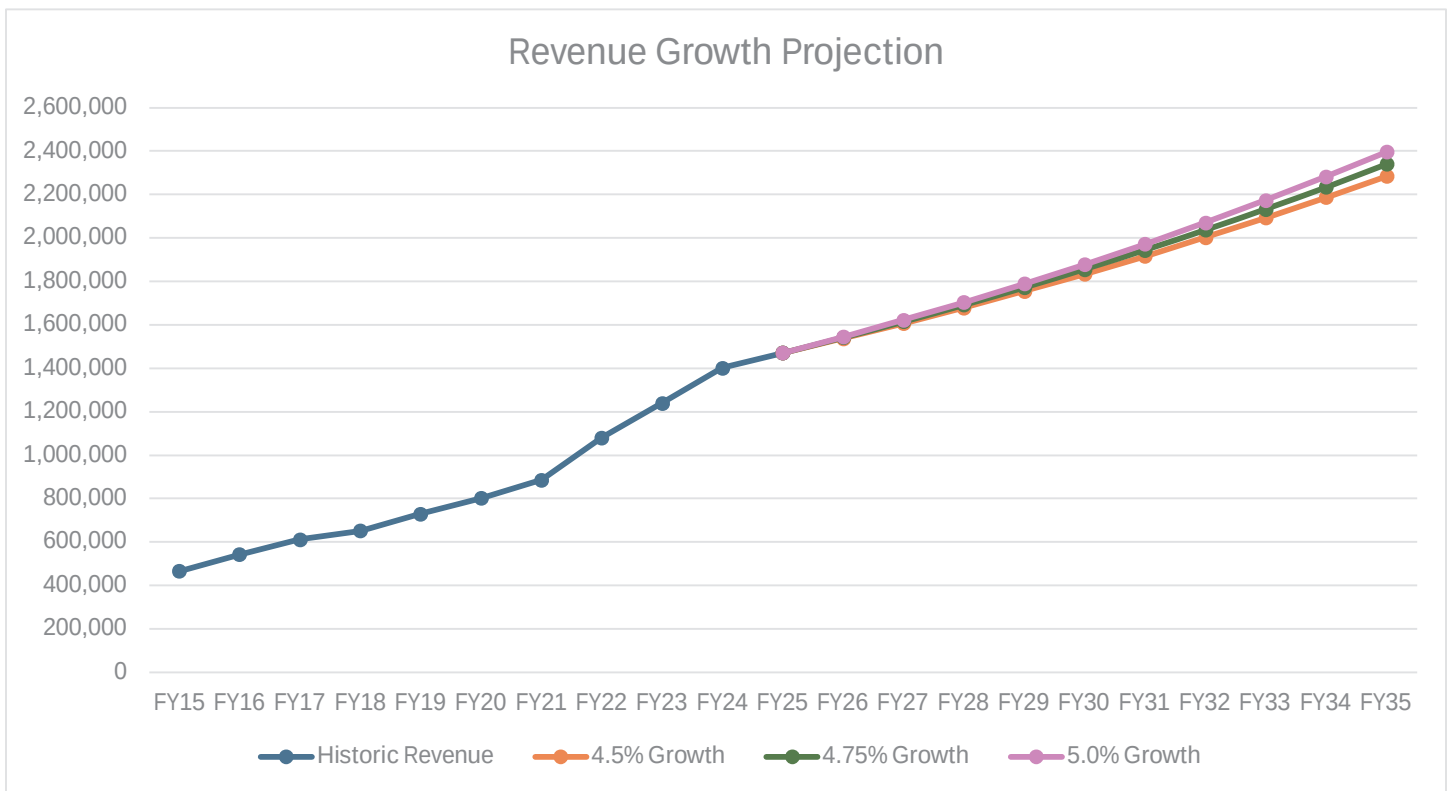
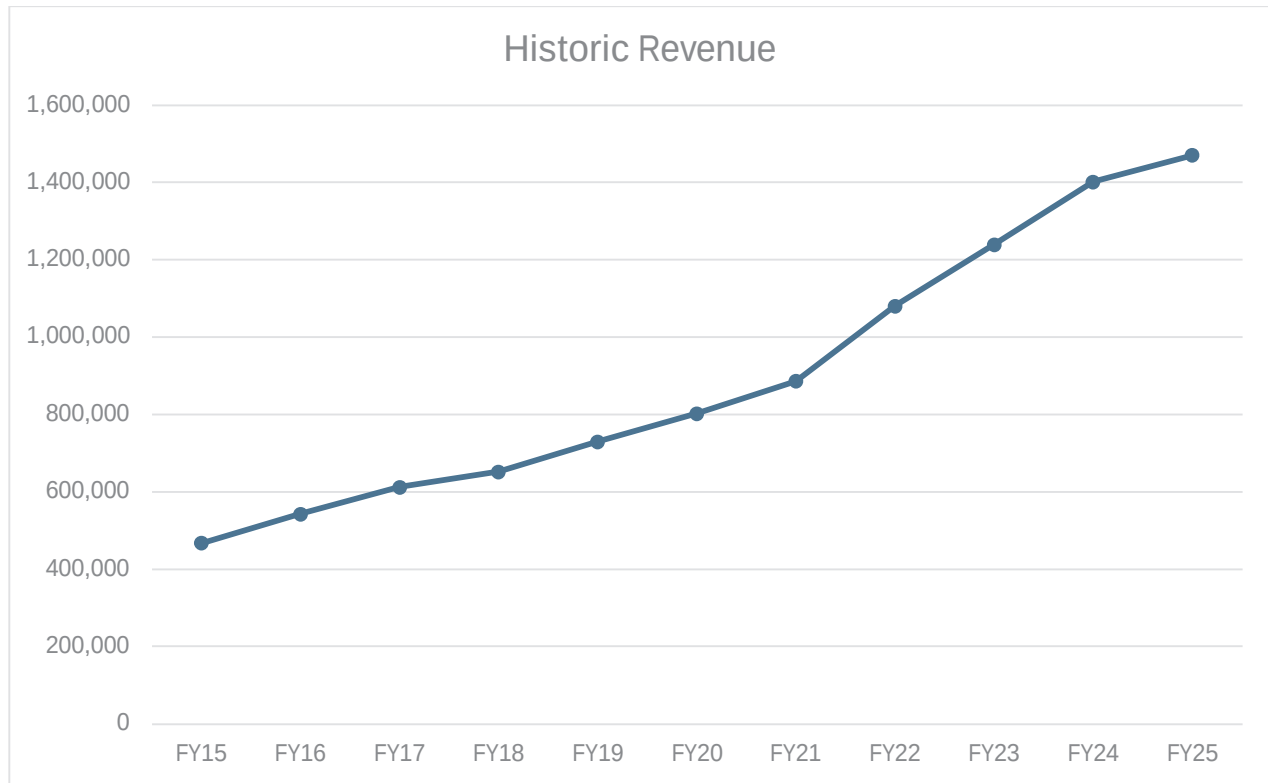
Historical TIF Revenue	
FY15	\$467,453.00
FY16	\$542,907.00
FY17	\$612,387.00
FY18	\$652,391.00
FY19	\$729,711.00
FY20	\$802,393.00
FY21	\$885,938.00
FY22	\$1,080,629.00
FY23	\$1,239,706.00
FY24	\$1,401,447.00
FY25	\$1,471,519.00



Revenue Projections (4.5% Growth)	
FY26	\$1,471,519
FY27	\$1,537,737
FY28	\$1,606,936
FY29	\$1,679,248
FY30	\$1,833,780
FY31	\$1,916,301
FY32	\$2,002,534
FY33	\$2,092,648
FY34	\$2,186,817
FY35	\$2,285,224

Revenue Projections (4.75% Growth)	
FY26	\$1,541,416
FY27	\$1,614,633
FY28	\$1,691,329
FY29	\$1,771,667
FY30	\$1,855,821
FY31	\$1,943,972
FY32	\$2,036,311
FY33	\$2,133,036
FY34	\$2,234,355
FY35	\$2,340,487

Revenue Projections (5% Growth)	
FY26	\$1,545,095
FY27	\$1,622,350
FY28	\$1,703,467
FY29	\$1,788,641
FY30	\$1,878,073
FY31	\$1,971,976
FY32	\$2,070,575
FY33	\$2,174,104
FY34	\$2,282,809
FY35	\$2,396,949





7. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM (CIP)

Consistent with the Community Redevelopment Act of 1969, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is authorized to plan, fund, and implement redevelopment programs, projects, and initiatives that advance the revitalization objectives of the redevelopment area. The Act also requires the identification of publicly funded capital improvements that support the implementation of the CRA's redevelopment goals.

The 2026 CRA Master Plan establishes a framework for continued investment within the redevelopment area through a coordinated program of capital improvements, redevelopment projects, and strategic initiatives. As implementation of the Plan progresses, projects will be prioritized, budgeted, and programmed based on available funding, community needs, and redevelopment opportunities. The Five-Year Schedule of Capital Improvements (CIP) has been prepared to identify projects anticipated for implementation during the planning horizon and to ensure consistency with statutory requirements.

Recognizing that community needs, market conditions, and funding opportunities evolve over time, the CRA will review and update the CIP annually. This process will allow the Agency to adjust project priorities, funding allocations, implementation schedules, and redevelopment strategies as circumstances warrant. Funding sources may include tax increment financing (TIF) revenues, municipal funding, grants, public-private partnerships, intergovernmental cost-sharing agreements, nonprofit contributions, and other available funding mechanisms.

The Five-Year Schedule of Capital Improvements identifies proposed projects, locations, estimated implementation timeframes, anticipated costs, potential funding sources, and consistency with the goals, objectives, and policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Cost estimates are based on available project information, historical project costs, and prevailing market conditions at the time of Plan preparation.

Implementation of major capital projects within the CRA is anticipated to occur through a combination of existing and future capital budget commitments, TIF revenues, grants, and other funding sources. The CRA has evaluated and prioritized projects based on redevelopment needs, community benefits, and projected funding availability. The longer-term vision outlined in this Master Plan will continue to guide future updates to the Five-Year CIP and support strategic investment throughout the redevelopment area.



Project	Type	Subtype	Location	Revenue Source Detail	Cost Allocation	Schedule (Fiscal Year)
1st Avenue Sidewalk	Infrastructure	Roads	Bay Street	CRA	\$13,000	2025-2026
Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Design and Installation	Infrastructure	Meter Reader	City-Wide	DEP	\$4,750,000	2025-2026
Airport Deepwell Design	Infrastructure	Water	Airport	Legislative Appropriation	\$1,332,938	2025-2026
Airport Fuel Farm	Infrastructure	Airport	Airport	FAA	\$159,000	2025-2026
Airport Fuel Farm	Infrastructure	Airport	Airport	FDOT	\$7,000	2025-2026
Airport Rotating Beacon and Tower	Infrastructure	Airport	Airport	Legislative Appropriation	\$325,000	2025-2026
Airport T-Hangars- Design & Construction #1	Facility	Airport	Airport	Legislative Appropriation	\$2,500,000	2025-2026
Airport T-Hangars- Design & Construction #2	Facility	Airport	Airport	Legislative Appropriation	\$5,000,000	2025-2026
Alabama Street Roadway Improvements	Infrastructure	Roads	Alabama Street	FDOT	\$359,888	2025-2026
Auditorium Improvements- Ceiling and Backstage	Facility	Historic City Hall	225 E Main St	CRA	\$500,000	2025-2026
Auditorium Improvements- Fire Protection & ADA	Facility	Historic City Hall	225 E Main St	Legislative Appropriation	\$2,500,000	2025-2026
Bay Street Sidewalk- 1600 Feet	Infrastructure	Roads	Bay Street	CRA	\$26,000	2025-2026
Downing Circle Mill and Repave	Infrastructure	Roads	Downing Circle	General Fund	\$230,000	2025-2026
Farr Field Recreation Complex	Facility	Parks	Florida Avenue	CRA	\$632,542	2025-2026
Farr Field Recreation Complex	Facility	Parks	Florida Avenue	Legislative Appropriation	\$2,867,458	2025-2026
Hardee Crossings	Infrastructure	Electric	City-Wide	Utility Fund	\$10,000	2025-2026
Heard Bridge Water Line Loop Construction	Infrastructure	Water	Heard Bridge	TBD	\$314,000	2025-2026
Heard Bridge Loop Construction	Infrastructure	Water	Heard Bridge Road	EDA	\$1,000,000	2025-2026



Project	Type	Subtype	Location	Revenue Source Detail	Cost Allocation	Schedule (Fiscal Year)
Heritage Park Restroom Improvements	Infrastructure	Parks	Heritage Park	Legislative Appropriation	\$500,000	2025-2026
Hidden Creek Street Lights	Infrastructure	Roads	Hidden Creek	General Fund	\$50,000	2025-2026
Hogan Street Extension	Infrastructure	Roads	Hogan Street	Rural Infrastructure Grant	\$441,125	2025-2026
In-Fill Housing Project	Facility	CRA	CRA Wide	CRA	\$1,245,000	2025-2026
LED Street Lighting	Infrastructure	Electric	City-Wide	Utility Fund	\$70,000	2025-2026
New Terminal/Pilots Lounge- Design & Construction	Facility	Airport	Airport	Legislative Appropriation	\$500,000	2025-2026
Paving/Parking at Warehouse	Facility	Parking Lot	1108 E Main St	Utility Fund	\$100,000	2025-2026
Peace Drive Sewer Replacement	Infrastructure	Sewer	City-Wide	Utility Fund	\$40,000	2025-2026
Power Plant Demolition	Infrastructure	Electric	Substation	Legislative Appropriation	\$4,000,000	2025-2026
Power Plant Site Rehabilitation	Infrastructure	Electric	Substation	CRA	\$1,000,000	2025-2026
Public Safety Essential Response Facility	Facility	Electric	1108 E Main St	Legislative Appropriation	\$5,000,000	2025-2026
Public Works Fuel Station	Facility	Public Works	175 Griffin Road	General Fund	\$15,350	2025-2026
Public Works Fuel Station	Facility	Public Works	175 Griffin Road	FDEM-HMGP	\$184,300	2025-2026
Public Works Fuel Station	Facility	Public Works	175 Griffin Road	Utility Fund	\$15,350	2025-2026
Public Works Fuel Station	Facility	Public Works	175 Griffin Road	Sanitation Fund	\$15,375	2025-2026
Replace Sewer between Knollwood Circle and Farr Field	Infrastructure	Sewer	Walton	Utility Fund	\$450,000	2025-2026



Project	Type	Subtype	Location	Revenue Source Detail	Cost Allocation	Schedule (Fiscal Year)
Riverview Heights Water Line Loop Construction	Infrastructure	Water	Riverview	TBD	\$2,305,000	2025-2026
Riverview Heights Water Line Loop Design	Infrastructure	Water	Riverview	EDA	\$195,000	2025-2026
Road Improvements-Oak, Bay, & Palmetto	Infrastructure	Roads	City-Wide	HUD	\$2,000,000	2025-2026
Runway Extension Study, Design & Construction	Infrastructure	Airport	Airport	FDOT	\$9,950,000	2025-2026
S. 8th Avenue Sidewalk	Infrastructure	Roads	8th Ave-Orange to Melendy	CRA	\$61,000	2025-2026
Senior Center Design and Construction	Infrastructure	General	Oak Street	Legislative Appropriation	\$3,000,000	2025-2026
Southwest Area Elevated Water Tower with Transmission Lines	Infrastructure	Water	Southwest	Legislative Appropriation	\$8,212,789	2025-2026
Tennessee Street Roadway Improvements	Infrastructure	Roads	Tennessee Street	FDOT	\$405,509	2025-2026
Underground Reconductoring at Valencia	Infrastructure	Electric	City-Wide	Utility Fund	\$30,000	2025-2026
10th Ave Stormwater Pipe Lining (if not done with SCOP project)	Infrastructure	Roads	10th Ave-Peace to FL	General Fund	\$250,000	2026-2027
10th Avenue Pedestrian, Roadway and Drainage Improvements	Infrastructure	Roads	10th Avenue	FDOT	\$2,570,630	2026-2027



Project	Type	Subtype	Location	Revenue Source Detail	Cost Allocation	Schedule (Fiscal Year)
Abandon Sewer Behind Oak Forest- Reroute to Sunset Park	Infrastructure	Sewer	Oak Forest - Sunset Park	SRF	\$300,000	2026-2027
Abandon Sewer Behind Stadium- Reroute to Orange Ave	Infrastructure	Sewer	Wildcat Way - Orange Ave	SRF	\$743,000	2026-2027
Airport Deepwell Construction	Infrastructure	Water	Airport	Legislative Appropriation	TBD	2026-2027
Construct Apron Expansion - Phase 1	Infrastructure	Airport	Wauchula Airport	FDOT	\$25,000	2026-2027
Construct Apron Expansion - Phase 1	Infrastructure	Airport	Wauchula Airport	FAA	\$450,000	2026-2027
Construct Apron Expansion - Phase 1	Infrastructure	Airport	Wauchula Airport	Airport Fund	\$25,000	2026-2027
Court Street Roadway Improvements	Infrastructure	Roads	Court Street	FDOT	\$184,223	2026-2027
Design Apron Expansions - Phase 1 and 2	Infrastructure	Airport	Wauchula Airport	FDOT	\$5,000	2026-2027
Design Apron Expansions - Phase 1 and 2	Infrastructure	Airport	Wauchula Airport	FAA	\$90,000	2026-2027
Design Apron Expansions - Phase 1 and 2	Infrastructure	Airport	Wauchula Airport	Airport Fund	\$5,000	2026-2027
Hanchey Road Reconductoring (Engineering and Construction)	Infrastructure	Electric	Hanchey Road	Utility Fund	\$100,000	2026-2027
Hardee Crossings	Infrastructure	Electric	City-Wide	Utility Fund	\$10,000	2026-2027
Heard Bridge Water Line Loop Design	Infrastructure	Water	Heard Bridge	EDA	\$170,000	2026-2027



Project	Type	Subtype	Location	Revenue Source Detail	Cost Allocation	Schedule (Fiscal Year)
LED Street Lighting	Infrastructure	Electric	City-Wide	Utility Fund	\$70,000	2026-2027
Resurface South Admin Parking Lot	Infrastructure	Parking Lot	126 S 7th Avenue	General Fund	\$100,000	2026-2027
S. 7th Avenue Sidewalk	Infrastructure	Roads	7th Ave - Bay to Melendy	CRA	\$54,000	2026-2027
Solar Farm Project	Infrastructure	Electric	City-Wide	Utility Fund	TBD	2026-2027
South Florida Avenue Water & Wastewater Extension	Infrastructure	Water/Sewer	S. FL Ave	EDA	\$200,000	2026-2027
Turner Avenue Roadway Improvements	Infrastructure	Roads	Turner Avenue	FDOT	\$441,323	2026-2027
Underground Knollwood	Infrastructure	Electric	City-Wide	Utility Fund	TBD	2026-2027
Underground Oak Forest/Crosby	Infrastructure	Electric	City-Wide	Utility Fund	TBD	2026-2027
LED Street Lighting	Infrastructure	Electric	City-Wide	Utility Fund	\$70,000	2027-2028
Industrial Park Access Road-Design	Infrastructure	Airport	Wauchula Airport	FAA	\$30,000	2028-2029
Industrial Park Access Road-Design	Infrastructure	Airport	Wauchula Airport	Airport Fund	\$30,000	2028-2029
LED Street Lighting	Infrastructure	Electric	City-Wide	Utility Fund	\$70,000	2028-2029
Replace Sewer from LS#3 Down Carlton Street	Infrastructure	Sewer	Farr Field - Carlton Street	SRF	\$602,000	2028-2029
Industrial Park Access Road-Construction	Infrastructure	Airport	Wauchula Airport	FAA	\$400,000	2029-2030
Industrial Park Access Road-Construction	Infrastructure	Airport	Wauchula Airport	Airport Fund	\$100,000	2029-2030

Project	Type	Subtype	Location	Revenue Source Detail	Cost Allocation	Schedule (Fiscal Year)
LED Street Lighting	Infrastructure	Electric	City-Wide	Utility Fund	\$70,000	2029-2030

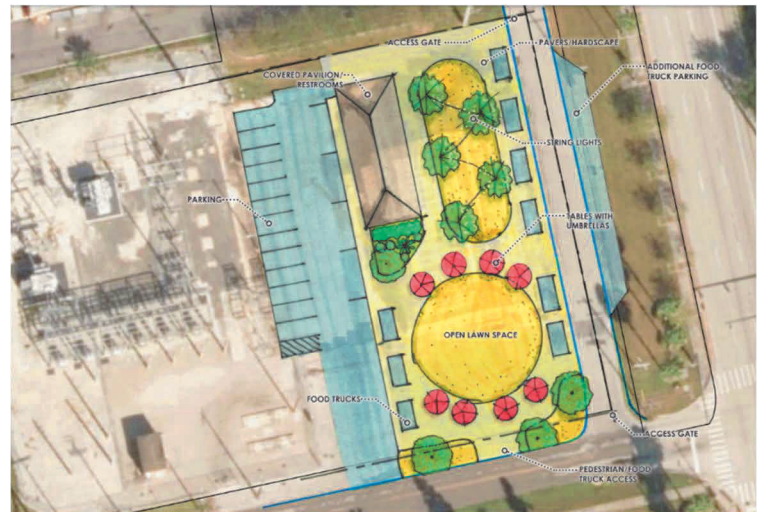
8. CATALYST SITES

The CRA Board and staff requested an analysis of potential catalyst sites that had the potential of either providing an opportunity for redevelopment of an existing site or providing some level of public infrastructure capable of attracting special events or similar to the downtown area. Consistent with the goals, objectives, and implementation strategies outlined in this Plan, these sites were selected based on their ownership, redevelopment potential, ability to support economic development and placemaking initiatives, and opportunity to address identified community needs. The sites were selected based on their ownership, proximity to downtown, reasonableness for development and/or redevelopment opportunities and the potential to address a dedicated need as well as desire within the community. The sites selected included:

1. 111 E Bay Street “Electric Substation”. Located at the northeast quadrant of the intersection of U.S. 17 and East Bay Street, this approximately 1.46-acre site includes an existing electric substation and accessory building, with George Burris along the eastern boundary. The property features a paved driving aisle providing direct access to East Bay Street. Although currently serving a municipal infrastructure function, the site remains underutilized in terms of its broader potential to contribute to local economic activity.

Owned by the City of Wauchula, the land is designated for commercial use under the Future Land Use (FLU) map and zoned C-2 Service Commercial. This presents a strong opportunity for redevelopment. Reimagining the substation site aligns with the City and CRA’s shared vision for adaptive reuse – transforming underused or vacant properties into vibrant, productive community assets. Such redevelopment offers a strategy to enhance land utilization and reinforce the character and vitality of the surrounding neighborhood.

The proposed plan recommends redeveloping the eastern portion of the property, which includes the removal of the accessory building adjacent to the existing electric substation. The shared drive aisle will be preserved and repurposed to provide additional

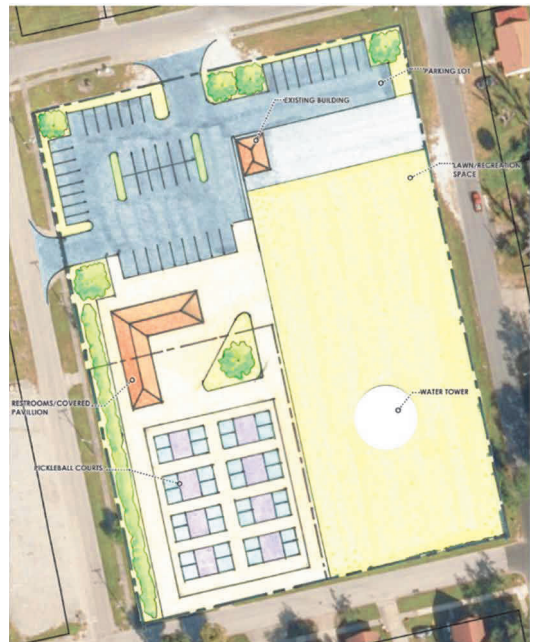


parking. The envisioned concept is a food truck park as it is a low-intensity, cost-effective redevelopment initiative designed for flexible use.

Strategically positioned to function as both a food destination and a vibrant community gathering space, the site is intended to accommodate seasonal or permanent food truck operations. The design includes open green space, communal seating, a covered pavilion with restrooms, and designated food truck pads. For larger events, overflow food truck parking will be available across George Burris Alleyway, with pedestrian walkways and crosswalks incorporated to ensure safe access. During such events, it is recommended that portions of George Burris Alleyway be temporarily closed to vehicular traffic.

Beyond daily operations, the site is adaptable for hosting special events such as farmers markets, fundraisers, and other community activities. While current regulations present challenges for food truck parking and operations, this centralized location aims to streamline compliance and generate revenue for the City. Additional design considerations include City or CRA-funded utility hookups, with costs offset through space rental fees. By reducing overhead through shared infrastructure such as prep areas, restrooms, and seating, the food truck park model addresses common financial barriers and promotes a diverse mix of vendors. This approach not only strengthens economic resilience but also contributes to the vibrancy defining the identity of Wauchula's downtown core.

2. "Water Tower Site". This site was identified in the 2019 Parks Master Plan as the proposed location for a skate park; however, it has since been reimagined to accommodate a larger multi-use area, additional parking, retention of the existing building, restroom and covered pavilion facilities, and new pickleball courts. Located in the northwest quadrant of East Palmetto Street and 3rd Avenue North, this approximately 2.19-acre site features an existing concrete recreation pad and a water tower. Prominently positioned within Wauchula's downtown district, the site has long been recognized for its potential to serve as a hub for youth engagement and active recreation. However, the area currently suffers from deteriorating infrastructure and limited amenities, which significantly reduce its usability and appeal. The property is designated for Public/Semi-Public use under the Future Land Use (FLU) map and zoned P/SP. Owned by the City of Wauchula, the property is designated for Public/Semi-Public use under the Future Land Use (FLU) map and zoned P/SP. While the site functions as a park, it is in a dilapidated state and requires substantial reinvestment to fulfill its intended role as a vibrant community space. Despite its current condition, the site was identified as a priority for redevelopment in the 2019 Parks Master Plan, and the CRA remains committed to advancing that vision.



3. 105 N 6th Avenue. Located at the northwest corner of Main Street and 6th Avenue, this 0.94-acre site spans two parcels in the heart of downtown Wauchula. The CRA-owned parcel fronting Main Street currently functions as a surface parking lot, with access from 6th Avenue and an alley along its eastern boundary and was originally developed as part of the 2010 Catalyst Site initiative. The lot is consistently used by visitors to nearby Main Street businesses; however, the adjacent proposed parcel is significantly underutilized and presents an opportunity to serve as a western “bookend” to the proposed project east of US-17. The northern parcel, owned by the City, is vacant and provides additional flexibility for coordinated and integrated development. Located within the downtown core, the combined properties offer a prime opportunity to activate Main Street frontage, strengthen commercial vitality, and introduce programming that complements surrounding businesses and civic amenities. This location is particularly well suited for a mixed-use concept that enhances pedestrian activity and contributes to the overall economic vitality of the district.

The property is designated as Historic Downtown Commercial (HC-1) under current zoning and has a Future Land Use classification of Commercial. Existing parking infrastructure can be leveraged to support new construction, reducing costs and improving feasibility. Potential development concepts include office and professional services to attract employment and daytime activity, ground-floor retail or restaurant space to energize Main Street, and public realm enhancements such as streetscape improvements, outdoor seating, and connectivity to adjacent blocks. The 2026 Plan provides three updated development concepts that both incorporate the recently constructed parking lot fronting Main Street. While building placement varies between the concepts, each situates new development toward the northern portion of the site, allowing access from both 6th Avenue and the alley along the western boundary. Conveniently located within the downtown core, the property offers strong potential for mixed-use development, including small-scale office space that can stimulate economic and social activity, support local business growth, and contribute to a more balanced and active downtown environment.





9. BONDING

Although not identified at this time, the CRA retains the ability to seek approval from its Board to perform bonding of projects for future improvements within the CRA. The ability for a CRA to perform the issuance of revenue bonds is outlined in F.S., 163.385; “When authorized or approved by resolution or ordinance of the governing body, a county, municipality, or community redevelopment agency has power in its corporate capacity, in its discretion, to issue redevelopment revenue bonds from time to time to finance the undertaking of any community redevelopment under this part, including, without limited the generality thereof, the payment of principal and interest upon any advances for surveys and plans or preliminary loans, and has power to tissue refunding bonds for the payment or retirement of bonds or other obligations previously issued.”

Bonding of projects may help the City and CRA complete certain projects ahead of anticipated time frames. Projects that are seen as having high value, importance, or impact on the community may seek the ability to be bonded to perform at a sooner date. There are some notable provisions within F.S., 163.385, including: *“Bonds issued under this section shall be authorized by resolution or ordinance of the governing body; may be issued in one or more series; and shall bear such date or dates, be payable upon demand or mature at such time or times, bear interest at such rate or rates, be in such denomination or denominations, be in such form either with or without coupon or registered, carry such conversion or registration privileges, have such rank or priority, be executed in such manner, be payable in such medium of payment at such place or places, be subject to such terms of redemption (with or without premium), be secured in such manner, and have such other characteristics as may be provided by such resolution or ordinance or by a trust indenture or mortgage issued pursuant thereto. Bonds issued under this section may be sold in such manner, either at public or private sale, and for such price as the governing body may determine will effectuate the purpose of this part.”*

Further, per Florida Statutes, tax increment financing and revenues can be used immediately, saved for a future project, or can be bonded to maximum the funds available. Pertaining to the limitations of tax increment financing, any funds must be used for specific redevelopment purposes within the targeted area and not for general government purposes.

Rather than incrementally finance projects, which would require years to complete and may hinder timely delivery or effective cost management, it is recommended that the CRA and its Board allow for bonding to complete projects. While bonding may slightly increase costs due to interest payments, the resulting rise in property values and taxable projects may help offset these expenses. Additionally, the CRA may utilize targeted reinvestment of site-specific, generated TIF revenues to further offset project costs.

10. NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACT & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The CRA has taken great strides to positively impact the community and redevelopment area. Since the 2010 CRA Master Plan implementation, the CRA has been heavily engaged in supporting projects and initiatives that further a broader goal of neighborhood stabilization and (positive) impacts to housing. In the past few years, the CRA has undertaken steps to:

- Increase the availability of affordable and workforce housing in Wauchula through a combination of project extensions, direct housing construction, strategic partnerships, and infill development initiatives, demonstrating a sustained commitment to implementing its Land Use goals.



- Create, expand and beautify parks to enhance quality of life, support economic development, strengthen community identity, and advance long-term revitalization goals identified in both the 2010 and 2019 CRA Master Plans.
- Strengthen community ties by supporting local businesses through rehabilitation incentive programs, TIF incentives, and promoting mixed-use and neighborhood serving commercial development that expands economic opportunities and housing choices for residents.

In addition, the CRA has undertaken programs that support local businesses, property improvements, redevelopment efforts, and economic investment that provide benefits to residents within the community. Although not tied directly to housing or neighborhood impact, CRA programs that support property improvements, façade enhancements, building rehabilitation, and redevelopment efforts contribute to economic development within the community. Through these programs, the CRA helps improve the quality and functionality of commercial properties, supports reinvestment in existing buildings, and encourages private investment that can indirectly create and retain jobs. Consistent with the programs identified in Chapter 5: CRA Programs/Partners, these efforts contribute to the long-term economic vitality of the Redevelopment Area.

HOUSING

Housing has been an ongoing priority for the Wauchula CRA. Following the Land Use goal to “Provide incentives to provide for both single-family and multi-family housing, as well as affordable and workforce housing, as needed”, the CRA has continued to work with Palmetto 8 in hopes of seeing this project come to fruition. Palmetto 8 has experienced delays over the 4 years. Little progress was made in 2021. On December 13, 2021, the CRA Board approved to extend the grant agreement to September 30, 2022, with no further extensions allowed.

In June of 2021, the CRA successfully sold the first house under the Home Assistance Grant Program. This program is designed to meet a need for single-family workforce housing. The program was successful and the CRA continued to provide affordable and workforce housing in the CRA area with the construction of 3 additional homes in 2023.

PARKS

The CRA has long recognized parks, recreational amenities, and public spaces as essential components of community revitalization. In addition to improving quality of life for residents, investments in parks help strengthen community identity, support public health, attract visitors, and encourage private reinvestment throughout the Redevelopment Area. Building on past successes, the CRA will continue to prioritize strategic park, recreation, and public space improvements that enhance livability, expand recreational opportunities, and support broader redevelopment objectives.

Parks at Peace River

The Parks at Peace River initiative transformed the Peace River corridor and Crews Park into a premier recreational destination through a series of phased improvements that expanded river access, trails, recreational amenities, and community gathering spaces. These investments have enhanced access to one of Wauchula's most significant natural assets while creating opportunities for tourism, outdoor recreation, and community events.



Heritage Park

Heritage Park serves as a key civic gathering space within Downtown Wauchula. Recent improvements enhanced the park's flexibility and functionality, creating a more active public space capable of supporting community events, festivals, and everyday use.

The CRA should continue building upon these improvements by supporting additional placemaking initiatives, public space enhancements, and redevelopment projects that reinforce downtown's role as the civic and cultural heart of the community.



Farr Field Park

Farr Field Park represents one of the CRA's most significant ongoing park and recreation investments and reflects the implementation of priorities established in the 2019 CRA Master Plan Update and Parks Master Plan. Developed through extensive public engagement, the Parks Master Plan evaluated City-owned parks and identified opportunities to expand recreational amenities, improve access to

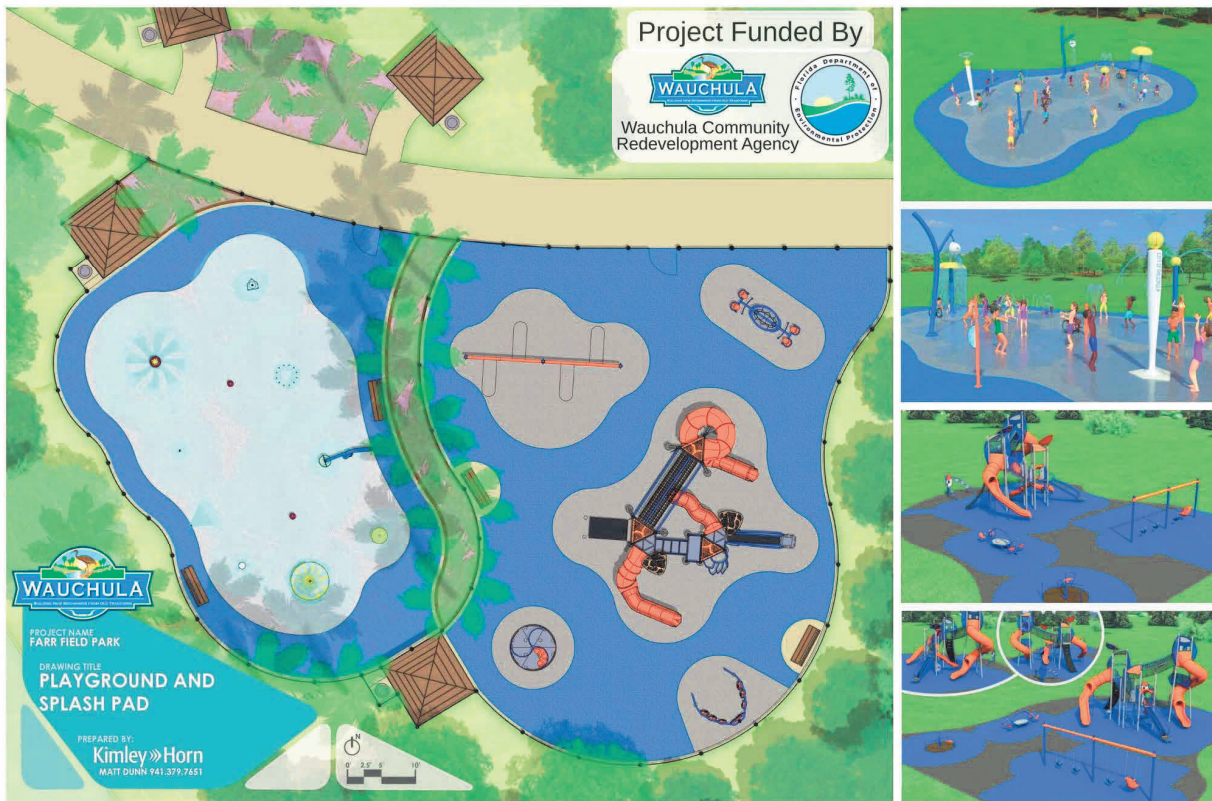


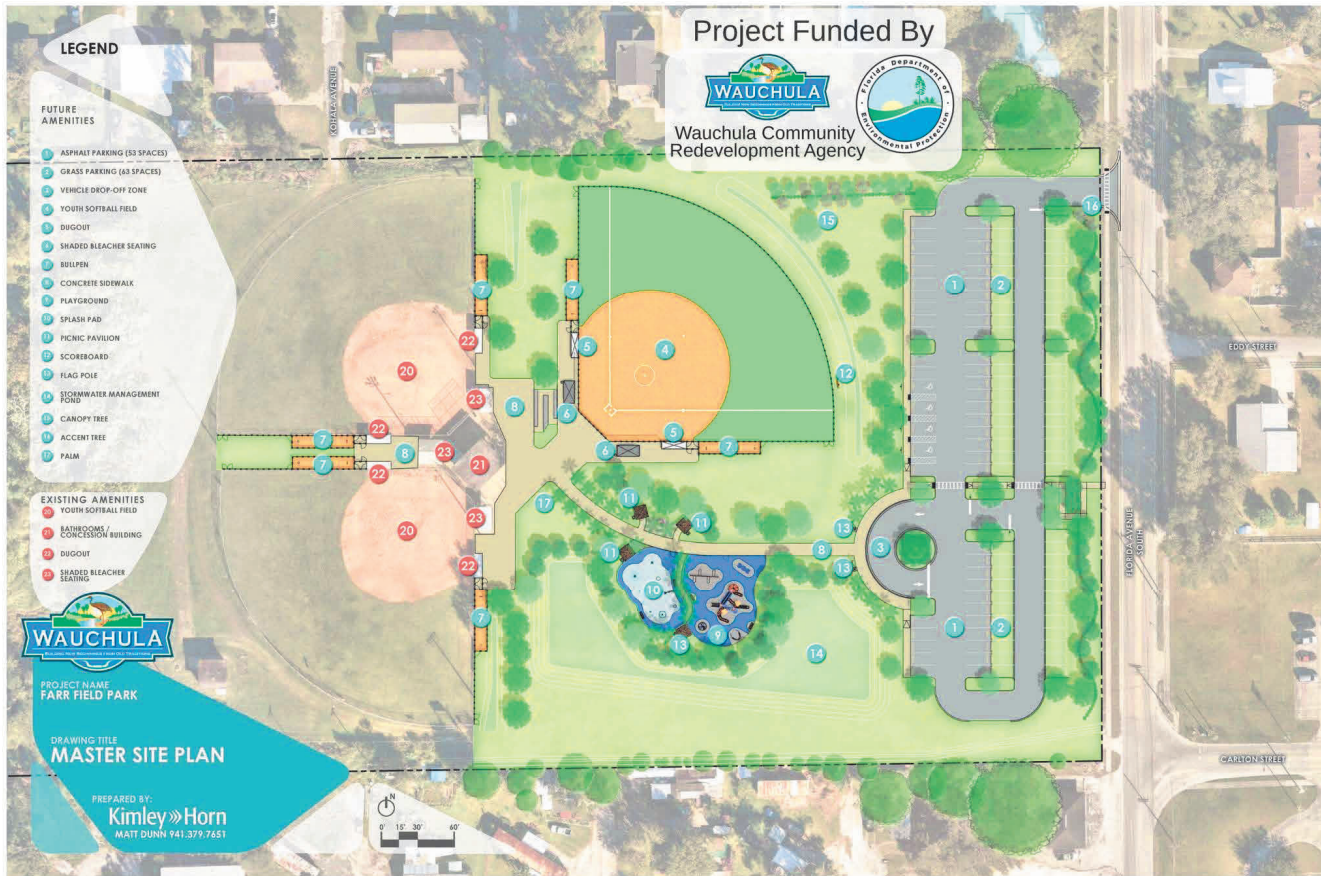
neighborhood parks, and create community gathering spaces that support quality of life throughout Wauchula.

Located in the southwest quadrant of the city, Farr Field was identified as an opportunity to address gaps in recreational access while providing amenities that serve residents of all ages and abilities. Improvements currently under construction include a new ADA-accessible playground, a splash pad, expanded pedestrian connections, additional parking, landscaping enhancements, and upgrades to the park's softball facilities. A key component of the project is the addition of a third softball field and modernization of existing facilities, enhancing the park's ability to host tournaments and regional events that attract visitors and support local businesses.

Beyond recreation, Farr Field demonstrates the CRA's continued commitment to leveraging partnerships and external funding sources to advance transformational projects. To date, funding has included contributions from the CRA, state and federal grant programs, and private-sector partners, including support from the Crews Foundation. Collectively, these partnerships have secured more than \$3.69 million toward project implementation, illustrating how coordinated public-private investment can deliver community benefits that would be difficult to achieve through CRA resources alone.

The success of Farr Field provides a model for future CRA initiatives. As construction progresses toward completion, the project highlights how strategic investments in parks and recreation can strengthen neighborhood amenities, support tourism and economic activity, improve community health and wellness, and enhance overall quality of life. Moving forward, the CRA should continue building on this foundation by pursuing additional partnerships, grant funding opportunities, and catalyst projects that expand recreational access and support community revitalization throughout Wauchula.





Collectively, the CRA's investments in Parks at Peace River, Heritage Park, and Farr Field Park reflect a strategic and sustained commitment to enhancing quality of life, supporting economic development, and strengthening community identity within the redevelopment area. These projects advance the priorities established in the 2019 CRA Master Plan by leveraging parks as catalysts for reinvestment, expanding equitable access to recreational amenities, and reinforcing the role of public spaces as community anchors. Together, these completed and ongoing initiatives have established a strong foundation for continued revitalization, positioning the CRA to build upon this momentum through future enhancements, including redevelopment opportunities detailed in Chapter 8 Catalyst Sites.

11. CRA GRANT PROGRAM

There are a variety of grant and funding opportunities available to leverage the TIF funds received by the CRA. Having an updated Community Redevelopment Plan with identified capital improvement projects and program enhancements in place will increase the opportunities for support and funding for specific projects by providing an overall vision, community support, and technical implementation criteria. The following presents a summary of various grant and funding opportunities available, grouped by relevance to the CRA and the project list above. This listing is not intended to be exhaustive; there may be additional funding opportunities that can further assist with design and development assistance for the identified improvements. It is recommended during the annual review process that further review and update of available and



applicable funding opportunities be explored to determine applicability for specific project(s), as well as revisions to application procedures, guidelines, and dollar amounts. This list also identifies the specific projects identified by this Plan and or projects discussed throughout the Planning Process and the potential Grant (source).

The Grant matrix provided following Chapter 12 was prepared considering existing and available (possible) grants from public and private agencies. The grant listing is understood to not be exhaustive but to provide a higher-level listing and approach to non-traditional (i.e., TIF) revenues.

Note: These grant opportunities may fund some components of the proposed sites but are not expected to fund all. Where permitted by applicable program guidelines, public-private partnerships may provide opportunities to leverage federal and state grant funding for eligible project components that serve a public purpose.

12. OVERVIEW, SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Amended and Updated 2026 Wauchula CRA Plan reflects the Community Redevelopment Agency's continued commitment to addressing the physical, economic, and social conditions identified within the CRA. Building upon the vision and momentum established through the 2010 and 2019 CRA Plans, this update provides a strategic yet flexible framework to guide redevelopment activities for the remainder of the CRA's term. The Plan integrates recent market analysis, community input, and ongoing capital investments to ensure redevelopment efforts remain responsive to local needs and opportunities.

Over the past several years, the CRA has made meaningful progress in advancing housing initiatives, supporting local businesses, enhancing public infrastructure, and expanding parks and recreational assets. These efforts have contributed to improved quality of life, increased economic activity, and renewed confidence in downtown Wauchula as a place to live, work, and invest. The 2026 Plan builds on these successes by identifying targeted catalyst sites, aligning capital improvements with long-term goals, leveraging partnerships and grant opportunities to maximize public investment.

The recommendations outlined below are intended to reinforce the CRA's core priorities while allowing flexibility to adapt to changing market conditions, funding availability, and community priorities. Collectively, they emphasize strategic reinvestment, thoughtful placemaking, and continued coordination between the CRA, the City, and project partners.

The Plan includes a more detailed set of recommendations throughout its chapters, which collectively form the basis for the overarching recommendations summarized below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to support responsible development and redevelopment of housing stock, with an emphasis on affordable and workforce housing opportunities located near downtown services, employment, and civic amenities.
- Advance economic development initiatives by incentivizing adaptive reuse of underutilized and historic buildings, supporting local and small businesses, and leveraging public-private partnerships to catalyze private investment.
- Implement and refine catalyst site concepts identified in this Plan to stimulate reinvestment, enhance connectivity, and activate underutilized properties, particularly those within and adjacent to the downtown core.
- Refocus and reimagine parks and recreation investments as catalyst projects by advancing redevelopment of the Water Tower Site as a signature multi-use recreational hub, evaluating enhancement and programming opportunities at Oak Street Park, and continuing long-term development and emphasis on Parks at Peace River as a flagship recreational, environmental, and economic asset within the CRA.



- Maintain a balanced implementation approach that includes both larger catalytic redevelopment projects and smaller-scale, lower-cost improvements that can be delivered in the short term to build momentum and visible progress.
- Continue to invest in transportation and mobility enhancements, including streetscape improvements, sidewalks, wayfinding, and parking facilities, to support walkability, business vitality, and downtown accessibility. This may also include the enhancement and incorporation of the City's alleyways creating both pedestrian connections but also can serve as community focal points and gathering spaces.
- Periodically evaluate the need for bonding or alternative financing tools to accelerate delivery of high-priority projects that provide broad public benefit and long-term economic return.
- Continue to utilize and expand the CRA and City's strong brand and small-town sense of place that has been established through projects and community improvements, honoring the community's historic character while supporting infill redevelopment projects.
- Encourage development and redevelopment that enhances walkability while preserving the scale, pattern, and character of adjacent residential areas. Design should prioritize active ground floors, pedestrian-focused building orientation.



GRANTS LISTING

#	Grant Name	Agency	Funding Max	Req'd Match	Grant Priorities	Types of Projects	Link to Site
1	Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	<i>None; project awards from previous years range from \$384,000 to \$1,049,970</i>	No	Competitive Grant program to units of local government in small urban and rural areas. To be eligible for funding, an activity must meet at least one of the following National Objectives: 1. Benefit to Low-and Moderate-Income Persons - at least 51% of the beneficiaries must be low-and moderate-income persons (total household income is at or below 80% of the area's median income), 2. Elimination of Slum and Blight - eliminate conditions of	The program focuses on the following four funding categories: 1. Commercial Revitalization, 2. Economic Development, 3. Housing Rehabilitation, and 4. Neighborhood Revitalization Types of eligible projects: 1. Water and Sewer Improvements, 2. Rehabilitation of Substandard Housing, 3. Street and Sidewalk Improvements, 4. Economic Development Activities that Create Jobs for Low-and Moderate-Income People, 5. Downtown Revitalization, including Facade Improvements, Streetscaping, and Underground Utilities, 6. Park Facilities and Community Centers, and	https://floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/assistance-for-governments-and-organizations/florida-small-cities-community-development-block-grant-program



				slum or blight as defined by state law and identified by the unit of local government on a spot or area basis, or 3. Address an Urgent Need - the activity must alleviate a condition that poses a serious and immediate threat to those living in the area. The condition must have occurred within 18 months of application. The unit of local government must demonstrate that it is unable to finance the activity on its own and that other funding is not available.	7. Drainage / Stormwater Improvements.	
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2	Rural Business Development Grants	Rural Development U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)	No funding maximum but smaller requests are given higher priority. Please note: There are two types of RBDG projects, Opportunity grants and Enterprise grants. Opportunity type grants are limited to up to 10 percent of the total Rural Business Development Grant annual funding. Enterprise type grants must be used on projects to benefit small and emerging businesses in rural areas as specified in the grant application.	No	The purpose of the program is to promote economic development and job creation projects through the awarding of grant funds to eligible entities. Applications will compete in two separate categories, business opportunity grants and business enterprise grants, for use in funding various business and community projects that serve rural areas. Open to Public Bodies/Government entities, Indian Tribes, Nonprofits.	Enterprise Grant projects funded: 1. Training and technical assistance, such as project planning, business counseling and training, market research, feasibility studies, professional or/technical reports, or producer service improvements. 2. Acquisition or development of land, easements, or rights of way; construction, conversion, renovation of buildings; plants, machinery, equipment, access for streets and roads; parking areas and utilities. 3. Pollution control and abatement. 4. The capitalization of revolving loan funds, including funds that will make loans for start-ups and working capital. 5. Rural distance learning for job training and advancement for adult students. 6. Rural transportation improvement. 7. Community economic development. 8. Technology-	Rural Business Development Grants Rural Development
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					based economic development. 9. Feasibility studies and business plans. 10. Leadership and entrepreneur training. 11. Rural business incubators. 12. Long-term business strategic planning. Opportunity Grant projects funded: 1. Community economic development. 2. Technology-based economic development. 3. Feasibility studies and business plans. 4. Leadership and entrepreneur training. 5. Rural business incubators. 6. Long-term business strategic planning.	
3	Regional Rural Development Grant* two or more rural counties	Florida Department of Commerce	Up to \$50,000 or \$250,000	Eligible applicants include organizations made up of two or more contiguous rural counties, which agree to cooperatively establish an economic or tourism development office with a desire to develop, promote and	The program aims to encourage rural communities to leverage limited resources by utilizing regional economic development organizations to develop and implement long-term strategies. 1. Attract new businesses; 2. Grow existing businesses; and 3. Build the innovative and	<u>Regional Rural Development Grant - FloridaJobs.org</u>



				implement sound economic strategies to improve the quality of life of the areas they serve. Consultants may not apply. An organization may receive up to \$50,000 or \$250,000, if representing two or more rural counties, recommended by the Rural Economic Development Initiative and designated by the Governor. Applicants must provide: 1. A current organizational strategic plan (Organizations that do not have a current strategic plan will be required to use a portion of awarded funds to develop or update their plan.) 2. Letters of support and documentation of financial or in-kind	adaptive capacity of rural leaders who are active in decision-making roles in their communities.	
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					support from each partner listed on the application; and 3. A full organizational budget.		
4	AARP Community Challenge Grant Program	American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)	\$25,000.00				<u>2025 AARP Community Challenge</u>
5	Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant	Florida Department of Commerce	\$75,000.00				<u>Community Planning Technical Assistance Grants - FloridaJobs.org</u>
6	Rural Infrastructure Fund	Florida Department of Commerce					<u>Rural Infrastructure Fund - FloridaJobs.org</u>
7	Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Grant Program	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	DISASTER RELIEF				<u>Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Grant Funds HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)</u>
8	Planning and Local Technical Assistance	U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA)					<u>Funding Opportunity: Planning and Local Technical Assistance</u>



9	Recreational Trails Program	Federal Highway Administration					RTP: Application Process, Submission Cycles, and Funded Projects Florida Department of Environmental Protection
10	Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP)	Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)	\$200,000.00	Yes if over \$50,000 requested. \$50,001 to \$150,000 requires 25% cost share \$150,001 up to \$400,000 requires 50% cost share	This is a competitive program which provides grants to local governmental entities for acquisition and development of land for public outdoor recreation use or to construct recreational trails.	A proposed FRDAP project must be for one of the three following categories: acquisition of land for public outdoor recreational purposes, development and/or renovation of land for public outdoor recreational purposes, or construction and/or renovation of a public recreational trail. acquisition projects are not eligible for retroactive costs. Costs for pre-acquired acquisitions are not eligible for reimbursement. Acquisitions cannot occur until after a project has been approved for funding.	https://floridadep.gov/sites/default/files/FY2025-2026%20FRDAP%20Application%20Instructions.pdf
11	Land and Water Conservation Fund	Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)	\$1,500,000.00	50%	Competitive Grant Program for county governments and incorporated municipalities of the state of Florida and other legally	For development projects and acquisition projects - both have the same grant request maximum	https://floridadep.gov/lands/land-and-recreation-grants/content/lwcf-application-process-submission-cycles-and-funded



					constituted local governmental entities with the legal responsibility for the provision of outdoor recreational sites and facilities for the use and benefit of the general public.		
12	Resilient Florida Grants	Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)					https://floridadep.gov/rcp/resilient-florida-program/content/resilient-florida-grants#Apply%20for%20a%20Grant
13	Paul Brahn Historic Revitalization Grant - Subgrant to Historic Preservation Fund	National Park Service					https://www.nps.gov/subjects/historicpreservationfund/paul-bruhn-historic-revitalization-grants-program.htm
14	FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)						
15	FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA)						
16	FEMA Public Assistance Grant Program						https://www.epa.gov/edfunds/fema-public-assistance-grant-program-available-water-and-wastewater-utilities

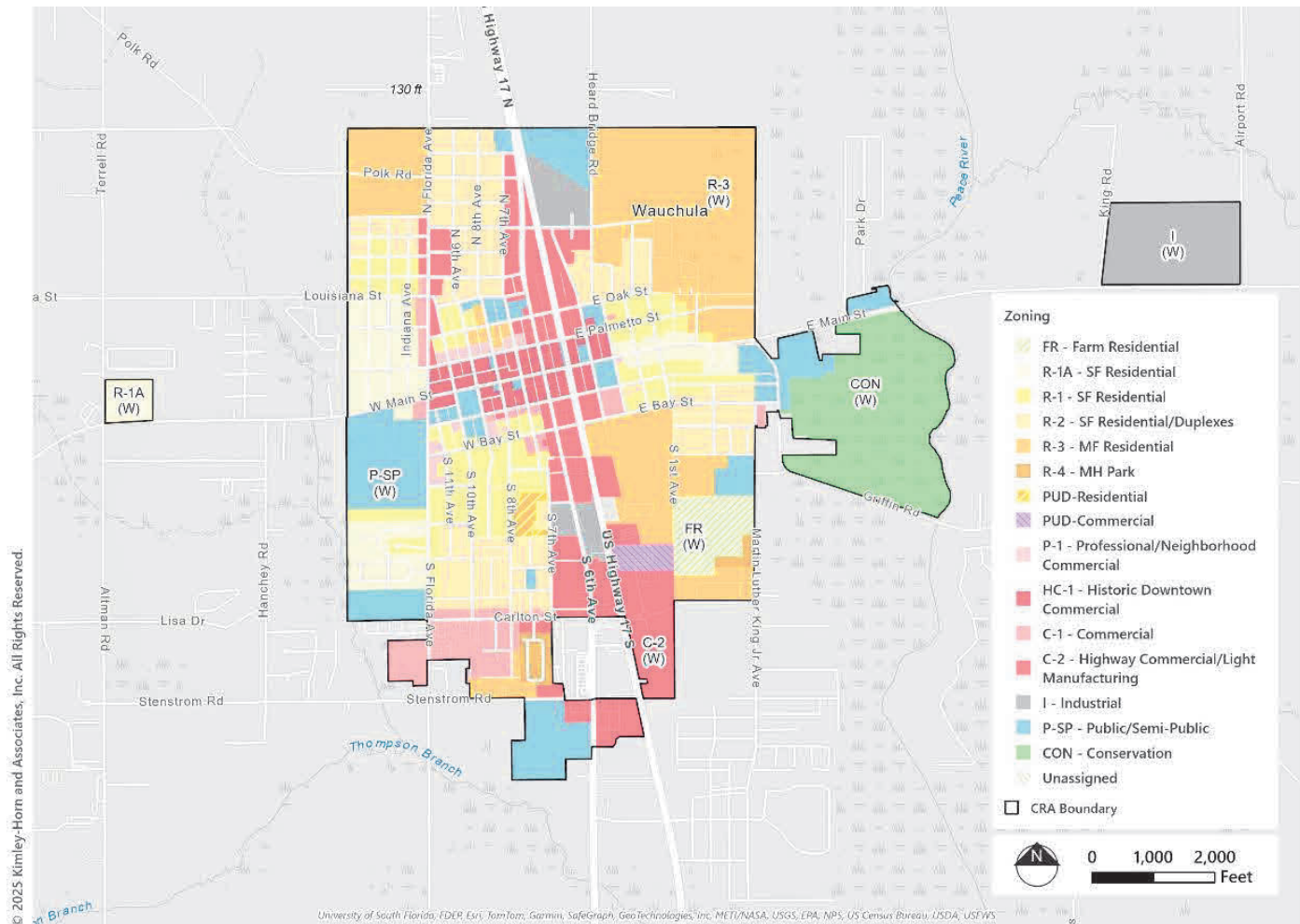


16, 17, 18	EPA State Revolving Funds: Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, Clean Water State Revolving Funds, Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA), Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program Grants						https://www.epa.gov/edfunds/epa-state-revolving-funds-and-grants-available-water-and-wastewater-utilities#wifia
19	Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)	U.S. Department of Transportation					https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SS4A
20	Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD)	U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)					https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants
21	EPA Brownfield's Program	Environmental Protection Agency					https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/types-funding



22	Surface Transportation Block Grant Program	U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration			If an entity believes they have a project that may be eligible under the STBG program, they should contact their respective State Department of Transportation (DOT) or local Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) for additional information on projects and project funding. The Federal Highway Administration provides STBG program funds to States by formula, yet the selection of projects for funding under the STBG program is the decision of the State DOT or local MPO, in accordance with applicable Federal requirements.	<u>STBG - Federal-aid Programs - Federal-aid Programs and Special Funding - Federal Highway Administration</u>
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MAP #1: ZONING – CRA PARCELS

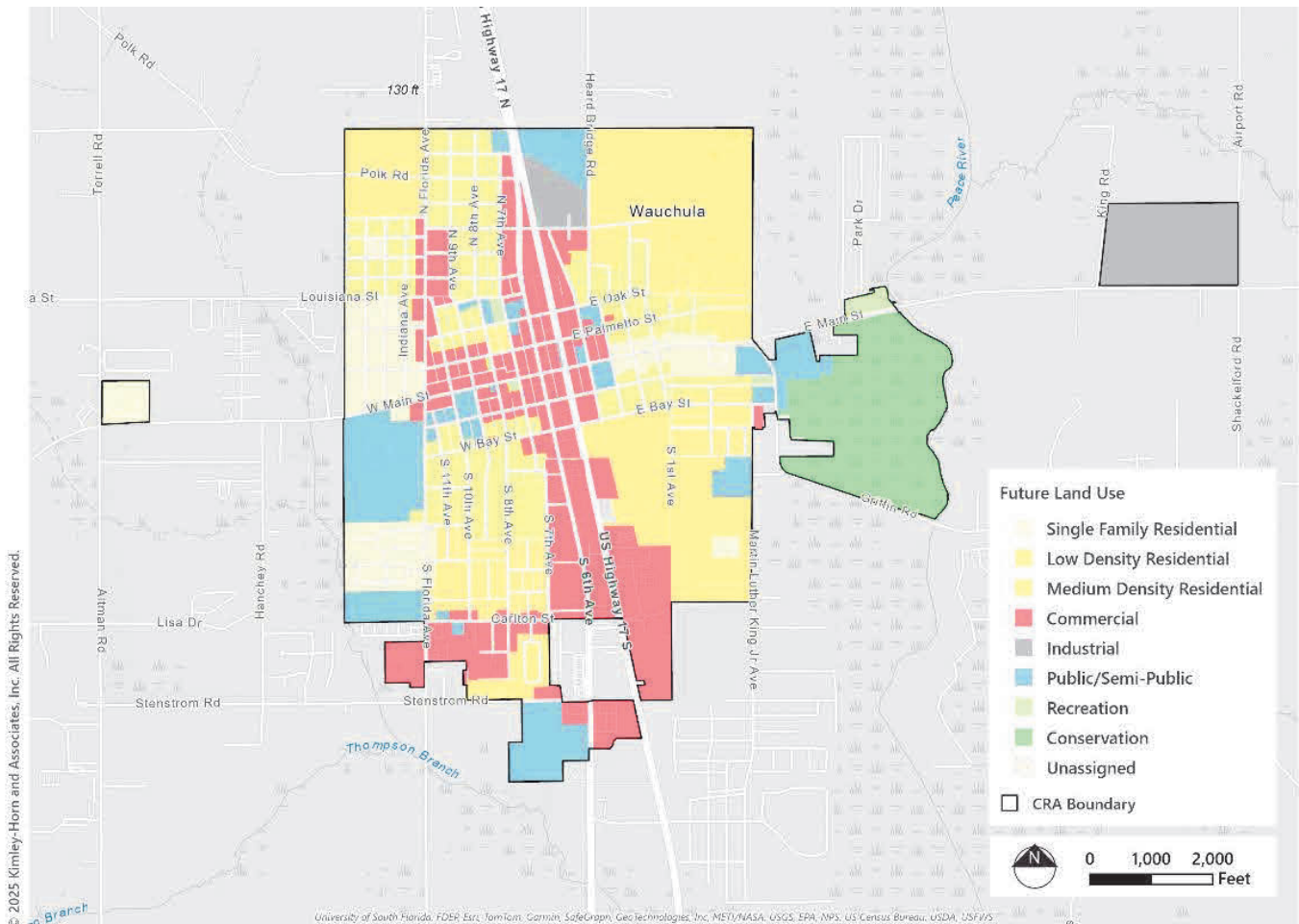


Zoning - CRA Parcels
October 2025

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MAP #2: FUTURE LAND USE – CRA PARCELS



Future Land Use - CRA Parcels
October 2025

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