



EAST FORT MYERS COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

2024

East Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Plan

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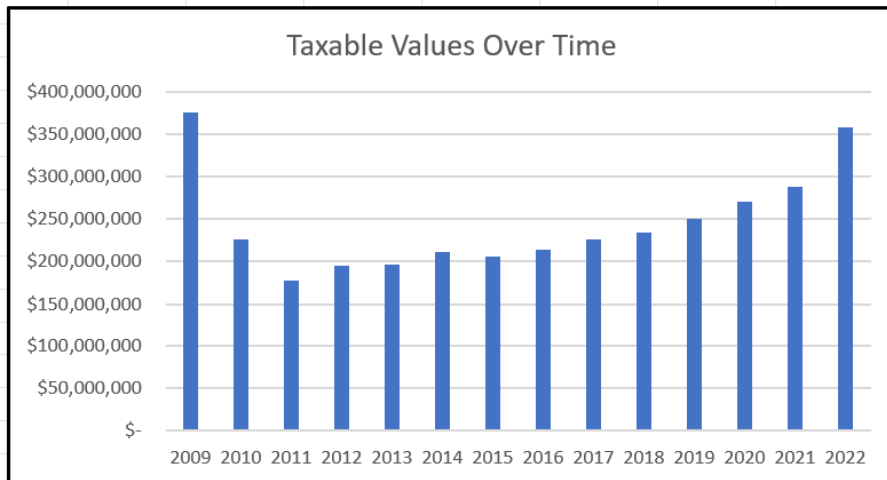
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PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Community Redevelopment Area Plan is to set up a series of ongoing steps to stimulate economic development, enhance and improve existing neighborhoods and assist redevelopment activities within the East Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Area (EFMCRA).

The City established a redevelopment area in this location beginning in May 2007. The EFMCRA was established at the peak of the real estate boom. This meant that property values were at their peak when determining the Base Year used to calculate Tax Increment Financing (TIF), the unique tool used to fund redevelopment activities—and so the East Fort Myers redevelopment area generated very little, if any, revenue due to the Great Recession which occurred shortly after. The result was setting the taxable value base year tied to high home values; because of the recession, the area saw negative growth in its taxable value. The previous East Fort Myers CRA District and Plan was formally abolished by the City Council in March 2022 (see Appendix 1).

Table 1. Taxable Values Over Time



Consequently, in late 2022 the decision was made by the City of Fort Myers to reestablish the East Fort Myers CRA and Plan using the boundaries from the previous East Fort Myers CRA Plan. This area will have to be reestablished, as a CRA District, and a finding of necessity will have to be made consistent with Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes. Specifically, under section 163.355 FS:

“no county or city shall be able to exercise authority over a CRA unless the area meets the criteria of “slum and blight” as defined in Section 163.340(7) and (8)FS. A separate report has been prepared, showing that the geographic area of the East Fort Myers CRA qualifies as “slum and blight” under Section 163.340 (7) and (8).”

Once the resolution of necessity is approved, an East Fort Myers community redevelopment plan can be adopted.

As mentioned previously, the boundaries of the EFM CRA will be the same as delineated in the previous CRA. They generally are as follows: south boundary Billy's Creek, east boundary City of Ft. Myers, Prospect Avenue, (city limits), north boundary the Caloosahatchee River, and west boundary is Billy's Creek.

The new East Fort Myers Redevelopment Plan is primarily designed to focus on guiding redevelopment and growth in the East Fort Myers planning area over a period of thirty years. The plan presents a footprint that will allow the community, business owners, local officials and city redevelopment and planning staff to work together to bring the vision for the area into reality.

The plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 163, Part III of the Florida Statutes – the Community Redevelopment Act of 1969. The Act outlines the steps needed to establish and maintain a community redevelopment district resulting in opportunities for incentives that are only available to such designated areas.

One of the primary advantages of establishing a redevelopment area under the provisions of Chapter 163 is the authority to generate a funding source called "tax increment financing" (TIF) for improvements and development incentives for the area. TIF is a special funding tool available to local municipalities that spurs economic development which otherwise would not occur. When a Redevelopment Area (RA) is created property owners within the district continue to pay the same property tax rates as those outside the district. The difference is that tax collections, over and above the "base value" are placed into a special fund that is used to pay for project costs. The use of TIF varies from project to project and area to area. In some cases, the CRA uses TIF to promote redevelopment of older parts of the community. In other cases, the CRA uses TIF for land acquisition and construction of infrastructure.

PLANNING AS A VISION

Every good redevelopment plan starts with a vision, one that is shared by all stakeholders. Visions are about possibilities, ideals, and standards of excellence; as much as they are about people, brick and mortar. Plans themselves, however, are only as good as the visions that inspire them and the actions that implement them.

Daniel Burnham, a well-known planner of the late 19th and early 20th century once wrote: *"Make no little plans, for they have not the power to stir men's minds."* The plans that will be developed within a community redevelopment area must encompass the ideals of the community and be limited only by the visions of the people who create them.

Planners, in America, have been interested in the neighborhood as a catalyst for redevelopment for over 100 years. Its roots are in the final decades of the 19th Century, as America tried to understand and shape the modern city. It was during this time that the neighborhood was considered to have an almost symbiotic relationship with other neighborhoods and the city itself. It has become clear over the last century that planning is just one step in the overall organizing process. Used as a tool, planning can help blaze a path to revitalization. If, however, creating the plan becomes the ultimate goal of organizing, neighborhoods will quickly find themselves at a dead end - they will have a plan and no constituency or clout.

The neighborhood level of redevelopment is as critical as any citywide large scale project which seeks to improve the quality of life for its residents. There is a hierarchy that is casually observed, but must be accommodated both socially and physically.

There is the personal neighborhood demarcated by the people that live nearby; there is also a larger functional neighborhood, perhaps centering on a school or shopping area; and finally, there is the loose identity with the community as a whole (the city). The linkages of people go beyond the neighborhood, and in the case of redevelopment, these linkages play vital roles.

The City of Fort Myers takes great pride in its people and its community. This is also true for the EFMCRRA. The last redevelopment plan for this study area, adopted in 2010, focused upon urban design planning standards with a strong emphasis on traditional urbanism. The main emphasis of our current efforts will be to identify projects and procedures to implement the CRA plan goal. Redevelopment plans can have an immediate impact upon those living in a CRA.

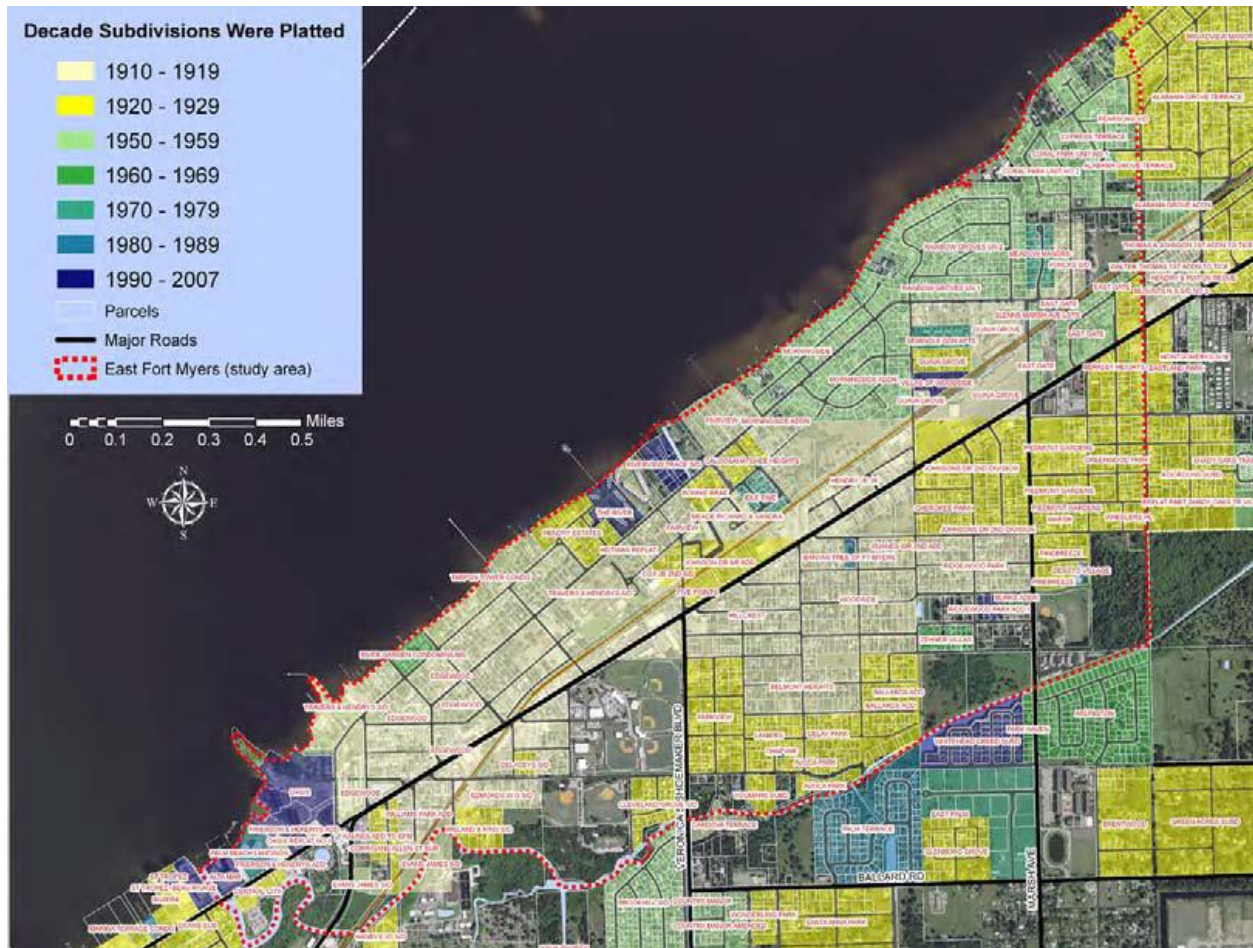
Redevelopment, for many communities, is the main catalyst for private sector investment. It is also the directive from Florida Statutes that redevelopment encourage private enterprise to undertake projects and programs that stimulate the economy (F.S. 163.345" Encouragement of private enterprise). Fort Myers is fortunate to have had private development partnering with the city throughout its borders and most notably in the Downtown CRA. Unfortunately, most of that redevelopment has been outside of the EFMCRRA redevelopment area and hopefully the current CRA plan will result in practical redevelopment impacts.

Redevelopment also has a lot to do with the improvements the city itself makes to an area. If it looks like the community is not willing to spend funds to make improvements, then developers look elsewhere. The Palm Beach Boulevard corridor is a perfect example of this. Start at either the east or the west entrance; the corridor serves as the gateway into the City. But what is striking is that the first impression is of a roadway to move cars through Fort Myers rather than taking you to a destination. There is nothing there now to distinguish East Fort Myers from any other area along this roadway and nothing that captures passers-by and entices them to visit this community.

HISTORY OF EAST FORT MYERS

East Fort Myers is a district community made up of varied neighborhoods with historic ties to commerce. It is located midway between downtown Fort Myers and I-75, with two waterfront boundaries (the Caloosahatchee River on the north and Billy’s Creek on the south and west). The study area boundary ends at Prospect Avenue (the city limits) on the east.

Map 1 East Fort Myers Development Over Time



Source: Lee County, 2008

Note: The proposed redevelopment area boundary has changed slightly since the map’s production, but still reflects the development process from 1910 – 2007. This map provides a quick survey of the era when each neighborhood was occupied.

A principal commercial corridor, Palm Beach Boulevard, connects I-75 with downtown Fort Myers and serves as one of three major gateways to the city. The corridor is lined with auto-oriented businesses; the boulevard clearly caters to motorists passing by. Sidewalks for pedestrians are narrow and incomplete and dedicated pedestrian crossings are infrequent. Many buildings are set far back from the street, with parking lots separating the businesses from the sidewalk and street. Some bus service is available, but



there are many opportunities to create a healthier multi-modal corridor. The area is one of the most economically and culturally diverse communities in Lee County, with a mixture of Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanics, and others living and working here. The East Fort Myers study area has experienced both prosperity and decline throughout its storied history. Recent development pressures along the river, coupled with increasing blight and neighborhood decline, have sparked the need for an overall strategy to guide

and encourage the continued revitalization of this important part of Fort Myers. This strategy began with the 2007 “East Fort Myers Revitalization and Redevelopment Plan” and is evolving further through the process described in this report.

A wide variety of housing types are found in East Fort Myers, ranging from single-family homes on larger lots to small cottages to apartment buildings. Historic homes in the area reflect a style of building that is climate-responsive, charming, and instructive as a pattern for new development. These homes have doors and windows facing streets and public spaces, which allows for



natural surveillance (also known as “eyes on the street”) by neighbors. The older sections of the neighborhoods are organized in the traditional pattern of interconnected streets and blocks. Older homes that are historic are scattered throughout the neighborhoods.

On the other hand, most of the apartment buildings built in the last fifty years were arranged on super-blocks. These development projects contain barrack style buildings usually facing parking lots rather than streets and have large blank walls and ambiguous semi-public spaces. The areas surrounding the apartment complexes have suffered from a compromised street network and a concentration of a single housing type, causing these areas to stagnate.



Natural surveillance of public spaces has been thwarted by physical arrangement of these apartment buildings; crime and safety problems were problems noted during the interview phase of the 2010 East Fort Myers Redevelopment Plan.¹ These same issues were brought up by residents during the public workshop process for this Plan.

Map 2. Neighborhoods in the Target Area



Source: Ft. Myers Community Development Dept. 2023

¹ Dover Kohl 2010 Plan

REQUIREMENTS FOR A REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

CONTENTS OF A COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Since this redevelopment plan must be initiated as a new CRA area it must meet the requirements found in Chapter 163.362 of the Florida Statutes which lists the mandatory requirements of a Community Redevelopment Plan. In order to satisfy the requirements of Florida Statutes Chapter 163.362 every community redevelopment plan shall:

- (1) Contain a legal description of the boundaries of the community redevelopment area and the reasons for establishing such boundaries shown in the plan (see Appendix 2).
- (2) Show by diagram and in general terms:
 - (a) The approximate amount of open space to be provided and the street layout.
 - (b) Limitations on the type, size, height, number, and proposed use of buildings.
 - (c) The approximate number of dwelling units.
 - (d) Such property as is intended for use as public parks, recreation areas, streets, public utilities, and public improvements of any nature.
- (3) If the redevelopment area contains low or moderate income housing, contain a neighborhood impact element which describes in detail the impact of the redevelopment upon the residents of the redevelopment area and the surrounding areas in terms of relocation, traffic circulation, environmental quality, availability of community facilities and services, effect on school population, and other matters affecting the physical and social quality of the neighborhood (see Appendix 3).
- (4) Identify specifically any publicly funded capital projects to be undertaken within the community redevelopment area.
- (5) Contain adequate safeguards that the work of redevelopment will be carried out pursuant to the plan (see Appendix 4).
- (6) Provide for the retention of controls and the establishment of any restrictions or covenants running with land sold or leased for private use for such periods of time and under such conditions as the governing body deems necessary to effectuate the purposes of this part.
- (7) Provide assurances that there will be replacement housing for the relocation of persons temporarily or permanently displaced from housing facilities within the community redevelopment area.

(8) Provide an element of residential use in the redevelopment area if such use exists in the area prior to the adoption of the plan or if the plan is intended to remedy a shortage of housing affordable to residents of low or moderate income, including the elderly, or if the plan is not intended to remedy such shortage, the reasons therefore (see Appendix 5).

(9) Contain a detailed statement of the projected costs of the redevelopment, including the amount to be expended on publicly funded capital projects in the community redevelopment area and any indebtedness of the community redevelopment agency, the county, or the municipality proposed to be incurred for such redevelopment if such indebtedness is to be repaid with increment revenues.

(10) Provide a time certain for completing all redevelopment financed by increment revenues. Such time certain shall occur no later than 30 years after the fiscal year in which the plan is approved, adopted, or amended pursuant to s. [163.361](#)(1). However, for any agency created after July 1, 2002, the time certain for completing all redevelopment financed by increment revenues must occur within 40 years after the fiscal year in which the plan is approved or adopted.

(11) Subsections (1), (3), (4), and (8), as amended by s. 10, chapter 84-356, Laws of Florida, and subsections (9) and (10) do not apply to any governing body of a county or municipality or to a community redevelopment agency if such governing body has approved and adopted a community redevelopment plan pursuant to s. [163.360](#) before chapter 84-356 became a law; nor do they apply to any governing body of a county or municipality or to a community redevelopment agency if such governing body or agency has adopted an ordinance or resolution authorizing the issuance of any bonds, notes, or other forms of indebtedness to which is pledged increment revenues pursuant only to a community redevelopment plan as approved and adopted before chapter 84-356 became a law.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY FOR REDEVELOPMENT AREA

FINDING OF NECESSITY

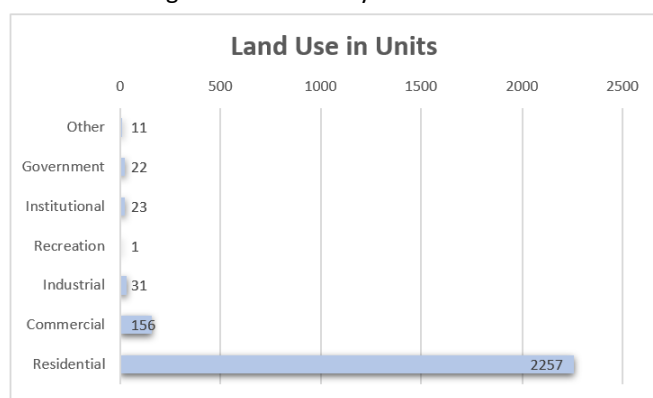
Establishing the need for the EFMCRRA in accordance with Section 163.355, F.S. requires a detailed examination of existing land use characteristics, socioeconomic conditions, and other indicators. Working with the Fort Myers CRA, LaRue Planning and Management, Inc. assembled background data, conducted field surveys, and analyzed the information in a manner consistent with Florida Statutes.

This report, called a Finding of Necessity, was undertaken for the purposes of inventorying and documenting the existing conditions of slum and/or blight in the proposed CRA area as part of an effort to determine the boundaries for the EFMCRRA. The City had established, as noted earlier, a redevelopment area in this location beginning in May 2007. Unfortunately, the formation also came at the height of the housing market boom. The EFMCRRA was established at the peak of the real estate boom. This meant that property values were at their peak when determining the Base Year used to calculate Tax Increment Financing (TIF), the unique tool used to fund redevelopment activities. Due to the Great Recession which occurred shortly after establishment, the East Fort Myers redevelopment area generated very little, if any, revenue. The result was setting the taxable value base year tied to high home values; and as a result of the recession, the area saw negative growth in its taxable value. The previous East Ft. Myers CRA was formally abolished by the City Council in March 2022.

FUTURE LAND USES

Ninety percent (90%) of the existing land uses in the EFMCRRA study area are residential uses as shown in Table 2, and nearly all of the residential uses are located north and south of Palm Beach Boulevard. There is a portion of the study area near Billy’s Creek that has high intensity residential in the form of high-rise condominiums. The distribution of existing land uses within the study area is very similar to the original location of uses when the area was originally developed.

Table 2. Existing Uses in the Study Area



Source: City of Fort Myers GIS, 2022

There are a total of 11 separate future land use designations within the City and five (5) can be found in the EFM CRA. The most prevalent land use designation is Residential Low Density, which makes up approximately 64 percent of all land in the EFM CRA. The Commercial Corridor (19%) and Traditional Communities (9%) future land uses comprise 28% of the land area in the proposed EFM CRA. Conservation and Recreation are uses within the area to a much lesser extent.

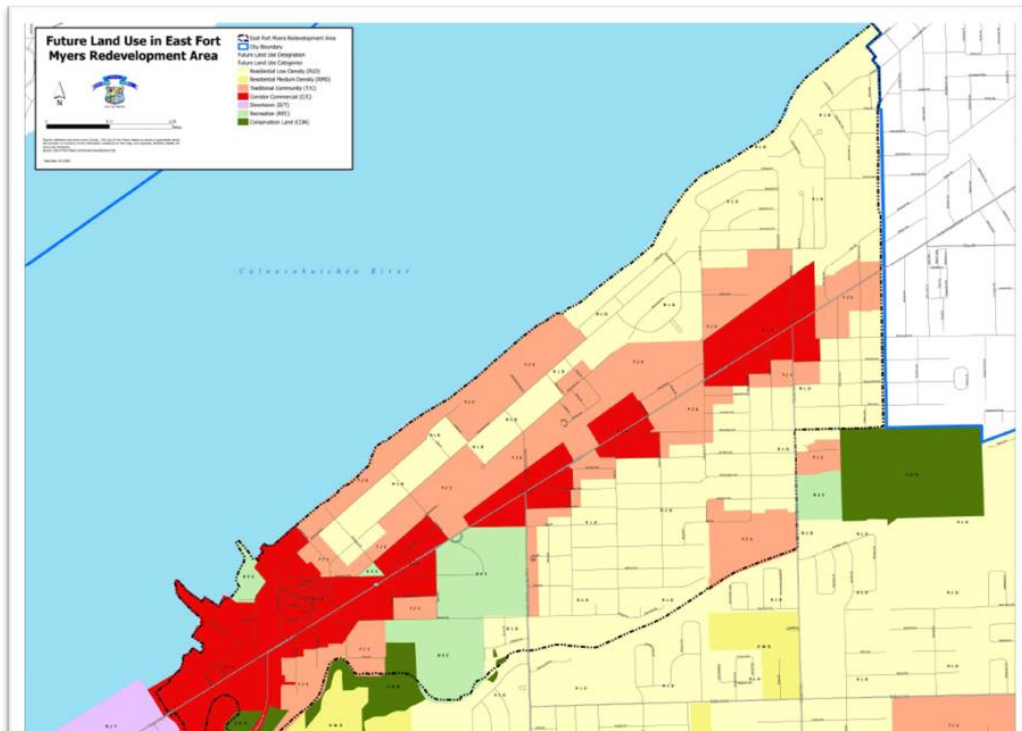
The EFM CRA should be designed to support a balanced mix of uses characterized by compact, pedestrian friendly design and neighborhood scale, and framed by architecture and landscape design appropriate to local history and ecology. The distribution of future land uses within the EFM CRA area is shown in Table 3 and on Map 3, below.

Table 3. Land Use in the Study Area

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Conservation</i>	11	1
<i>Recreation</i>	80	8
<i>Traditional Communities</i>	91	9
<i>Commercial Corridor</i>	193	19
<i>Residential Low Density</i>	665	64

Source: City of Ft. Myers, LaRue Planning, 2023

Map 3. Future Land Use Map of the Study Area



Source: City of Fot Myers, 2023

ZONING DISTRICTS

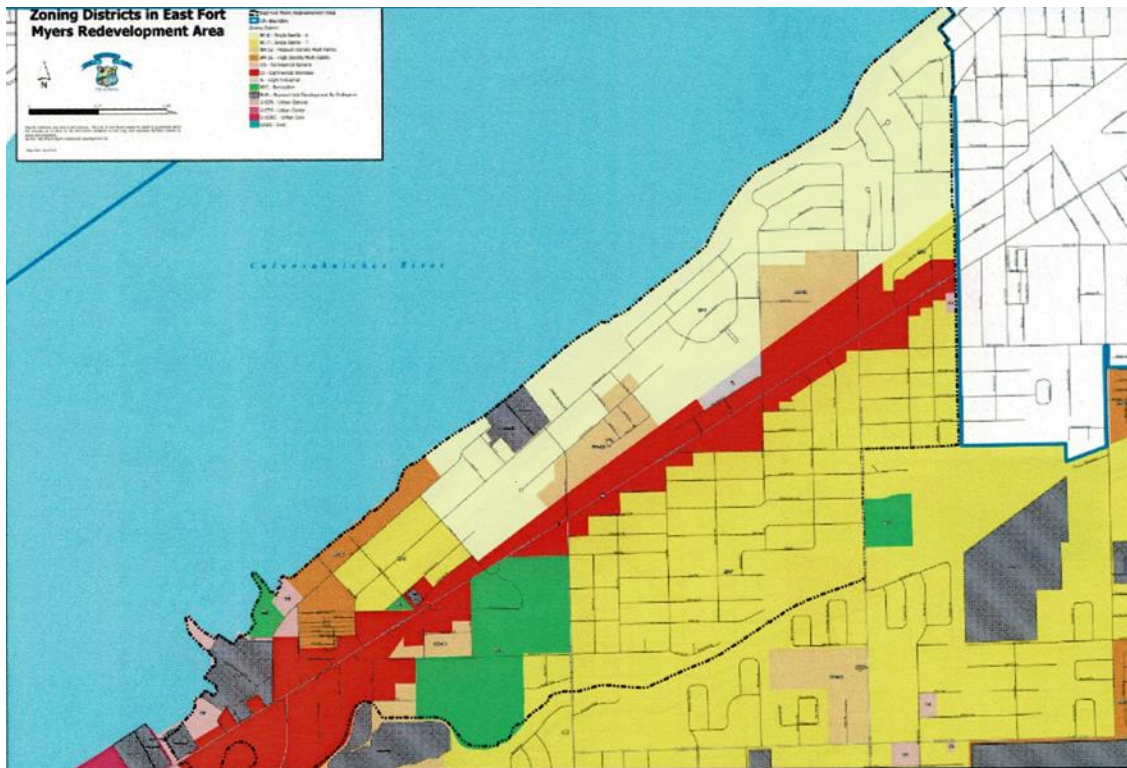
The City of Fort Myers maintains 30 separate zoning districts. The EFM CRA contains eight (8) districts. The distribution of zoning districts within the EFM CRA is shown on Map 4, and the percentage of each in Table 4.

Table 4. Zoning In the Study Area

Zoning Category	Acreage	Percent
RS-6 Single Family	271	27
RS-7 Single Family	341	34
RM-12 Multi-Family	123	12
CG Commercial General	12	1
CI Commercial Intensive	193	19
IL Light Industrial	5	1
PUD Planned Unit Development	30	3
Recreation	79	8

Source: City of Fort Myers, LaRue Planning, 2023

Map 4. Zoning Map of the Study Area



Source: City of Fort Myers, 2023

PUBLIC LANDS

Open space means undeveloped lands suitable for passive recreation or conservation uses. Several community parks – Billy Bowlegs, Riverside, and Shady Oaks – and a regional park, Terry Park, are located in East Fort Myers. These excellent parks allow for many recreational opportunities, yet the community lacks small neighborhood parks and playgrounds. The improved Tarpon Street pier (prior to Hurricane Ian) provided access to the Caloosahatchee River while the continued restoration efforts at Billy’s Creek provide for resident and visitor access to the waterway. While access to the water does exist, connections to these spaces need to be improved and overall safety enhanced. In addition, there is a lull in development along the river, so now would be an excellent opportunity to establish guidelines for future public access to the Caloosahatchee and Billy’s Creek waterways.



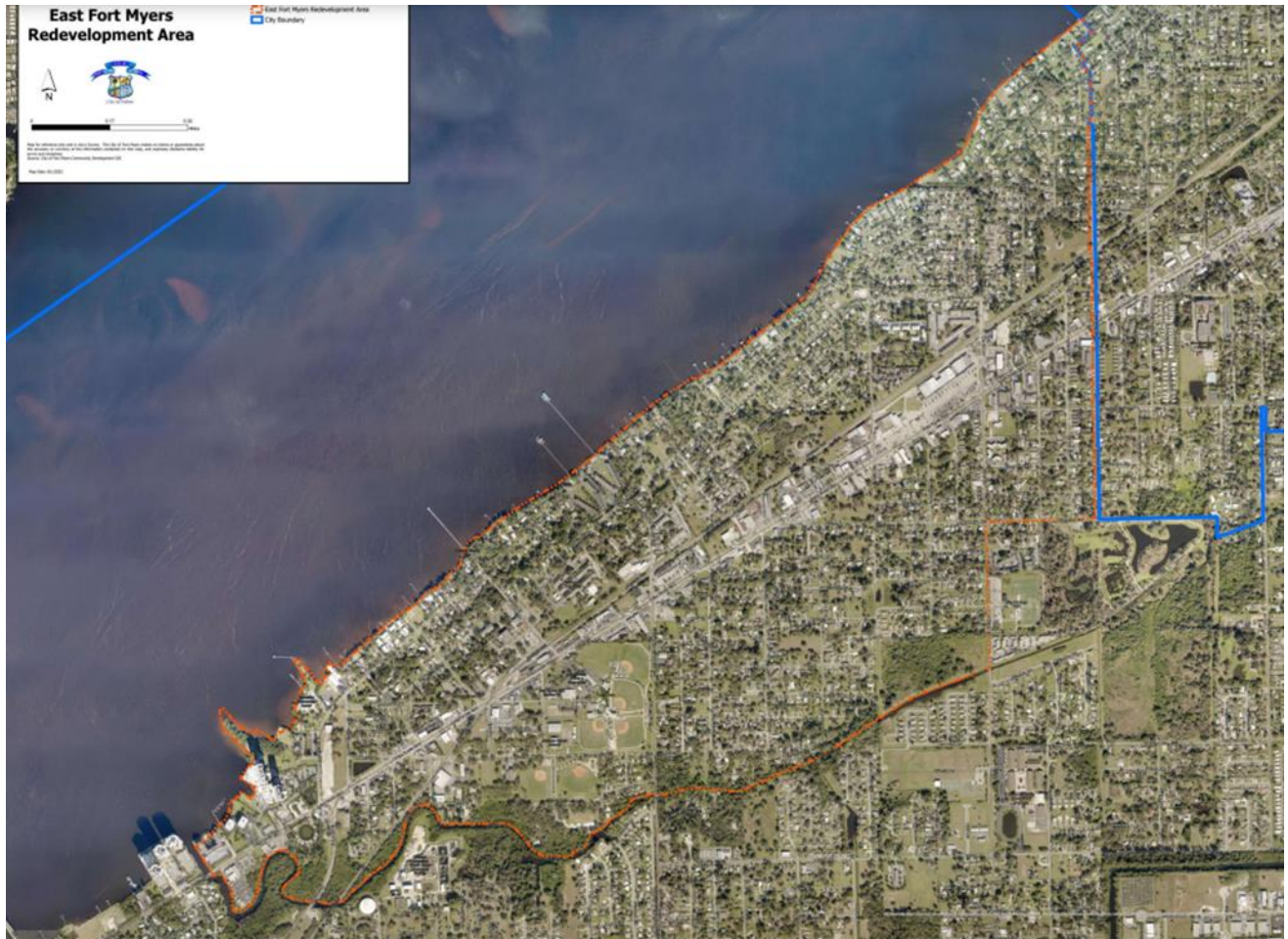
Map 5. Existing Public Green Space



TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

The existing street layout is depicted on Map 6. The traffic circulation within the area is mainly a grid street system that is well formed, however, in many instances through traffic is cut off either by the railroad or dead end streets.

Map 6. Roadway System in the Study Area



Source: City of Fort Myers, 2010

Projects that continue to improve the physical facilities of the EFMCR and the City will help establish a consistency of conditions throughout. High standards and consistency of facilities elevates the perception, if not the reality, that the City is making a progressive attempt to improve the development climate.

Deteriorated infrastructure, including widespread deterioration of swales used for drainage, which is generally caused by inadequate off-street parking or lack of funding to establish appropriate drainage systems, exist throughout (refer to Finding of Necessity). Because there is a lack of infrastructure improvements, such as sidewalks and drainage, the street edges suffer, causing further deterioration on what may be previously considered adequate roadway surfaces.

Deteriorating infrastructure is also of concern for developers considering building in the EFMCR. Developers need to feel comfortable going into a redevelopment process so that there won't be any surprises when it comes to infrastructure, often times the most expensive piece of the development puzzle.



Typical Palm Beach Boulevard Roadway

At the time of the last redevelopment plan in 2008-2010, Florida DOT was making physical changes to Palm Beach Boulevard that enhanced its role as a channel to move traffic

as smoothly as possible between downtown and I-75. The redesign added extremely long median strips which greatly reduce the ability of motorists to circulate to destinations other than those that are straight ahead. Business owners and their patrons now continue to be frustrated about the difficulty of accessing businesses, particularly north to south across Palm Beach Boulevard. The faltering economy has clearly hurt businesses too, but there was very credible reports of significant declines in revenue observed since the median barriers were installed, a demonstration of how the design of the built environment can affect this community's economic health. Florida DOT did make



Typical Palm Beach Boulevard Intersection

recent changes to the Palm Beach Boulevard corridor just east of the Rock Lake Resort. This was a coordinated effort to make Palm Beach Boulevard two-way from Seaboard Street westward to Fowler Street. This section was one-way westbound.



New Intersection Improvements SR 80 East and

Street. This section was one-way westbound.

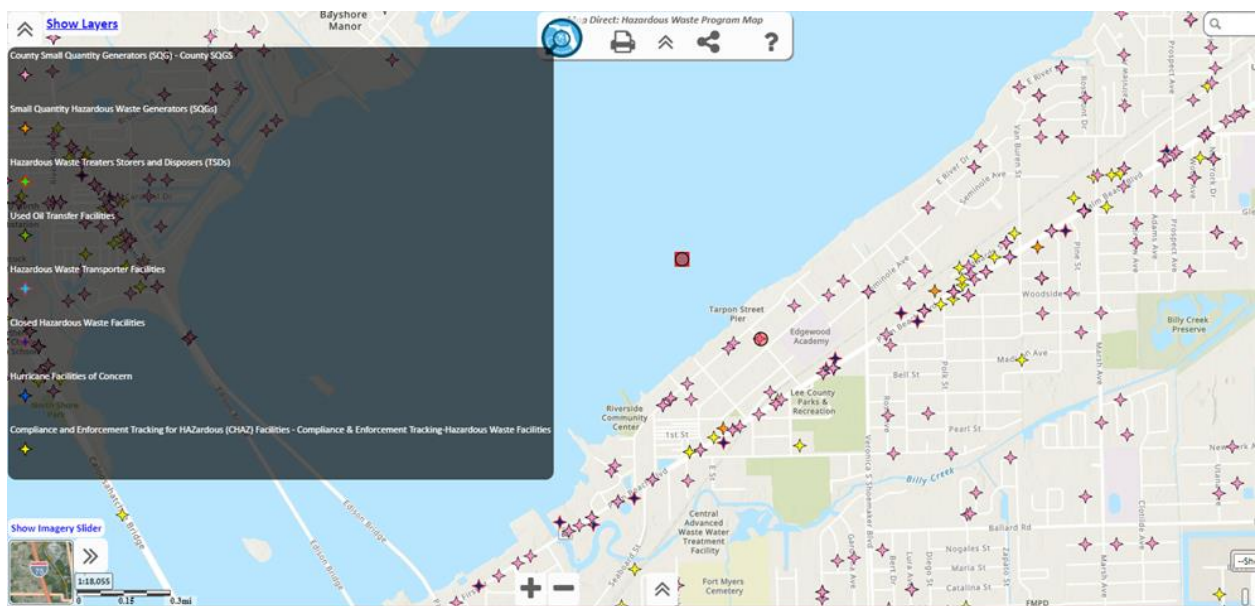
BROWNFIELDS DESIGNATION IN THE EFMCRRA

A brownfield area means a contiguous area of one or more brownfield sites, some of which may not be contaminated, and which has been designated by a local government by resolution. Such areas may include all or portions of community redevelopment areas, enterprise zones, empowerment zones, and other such designated poor communities and areas, and Florida Department of Environment Protection (DEP) or the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated brownfield pilot projects. 376.79(4), F.S.

What makes brownfields important to recognize, as part of a redevelopment program, is that they are real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence, potential presence or the perception of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties protects the environment, reduces blight, and takes development pressures off green spaces and working lands.

Contaminated sites along Palm Beach Boulevard are to be expected, considering the abundant numbers of car dealers, gas stations and fast food establishments. There are ten (10) petroleum sites and one identified as “other”. However, the majority of sites are identified as Small Quantity Hazardous Waste Generators. These sites have already been identified and are included in DEP’s monitoring system. While these locations have been identified, the mere presence of a contaminated location may be enough to dissuade a potential developer considering a site nearby.

Map 7 Identified Contaminated Sites in the Study Area



Source: Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 2023

Consider this excerpt from the Environmental Protection Agency:

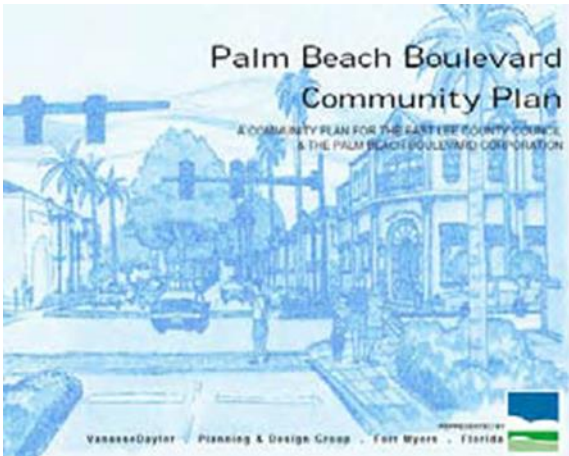
A brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which could be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Cleaning up and redeveloping these properties can remove contaminants that harm air and water quality, reduce blight, and take development pressure off green spaces and working lands.

- **Brownfield redevelopment can transform abandoned and underused sites into community and economic assets** such as parks and plazas, mixed-use developments, and homes. Brownfield properties are often centrally located in areas where infrastructure is already available, which can make them valuable properties for development.
- **Development and infrastructure policies influence the ease and cost of redeveloping brownfield properties.** Smart growth land use strategies can make redevelopment more cost effective by allowing brownfield properties to redevelop with a mix of uses or encouraging more efficient land use. Directing infrastructure spending to roads and water and sewer lines on brownfield properties can also make these sites more attractive to developers.
- **Brownfield sites are often in infill locations with existing transportation and utility infrastructure.** Redevelopment in infill locations can use vacant buildings, parking lots, or other underused sites for new amenities, homes, and businesses near existing neighborhoods. When infill development occurs near transit or employment centers, it can reduce the distance people need to drive and give them other transportation options.

With funding from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) brownfield program, and the cooperation of the property owners, sites can be assessed for the historical potential of environmental contamination, and, if needed, field testing of soil, water and buildings conducted. If sites prove to be contaminated, loan and subgrant funding through a Revolving Loan Fund, created with a cleanup grant from the EPA, is available.

PREVIOUS REDEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR EAST FORT MYERS

Community planning for this area began with the “Palm Beach Boulevard Community Plan” in 2002, sponsored jointly by a civic group, the East Lee County Council, and a business group, the Palm Beach Boulevard Corporation. This plan included land in the unincorporated county east as far as I-75. Upon



completion the plan was accepted by both the City Council and County Commissioners; the Lee County Comprehensive Plan has a separate section devoted to policies that resulted from that plan. The County Plan has a goal specifically for the area just east of the proposed EFM CRA:

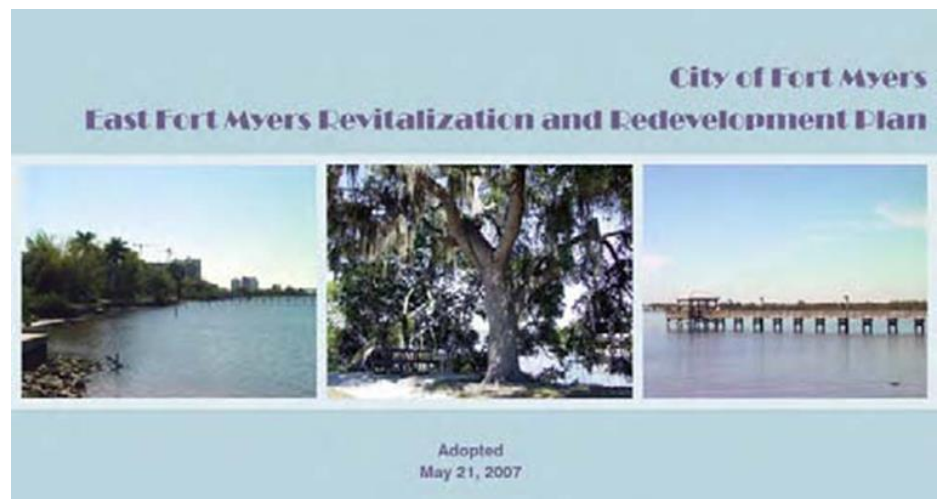
GOAL 34: TICE HISTORIC COMMUNITY PLAN. Redevelop the Community Plan area into vibrant commercial and residential neighborhoods, with mixed use centers, landscaping, safe pedestrian and

bicycle facilities, improved transit service, and an array of public space and recreational areas while protecting the community’s historic resources.

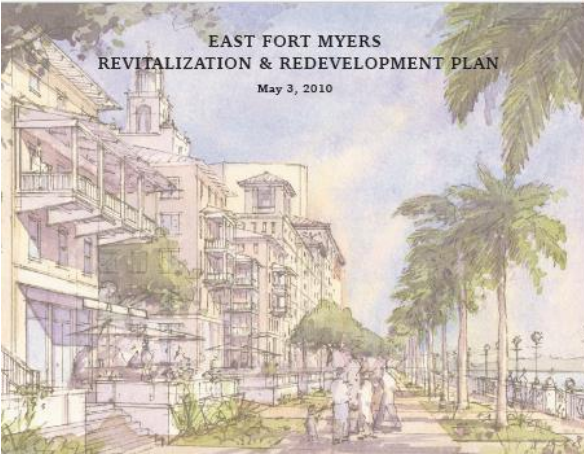
In early 2006 Fort Myers began a more intensive study of the city portion of East Fort Myers. This would lead to the May 2007 version of the “East Fort Myers Revitalization and Redevelopment Plan.” Construction of high rise towers was extending east from downtown at a rapid pace and city leaders decided a more thorough examination was warranted as to whether this same development pattern was suitable for East Fort Myers. Three sub-areas were examined:

1. The central corridor formed by Palm Beach Boulevard and the railroad
2. The residential neighborhoods north of the corridor
3. The residential neighborhoods south of the corridor

Due to strong development pressure, most attention was paid to the residential neighborhoods north of Palm Beach Boulevard, particularly the sub-area from Billy’s Creek east to Tarpon Street. Ultimately



some of the strongest recommendations of that study, which would have limited building heights to three and five stories in that sub-area, proved too controversial and were removed from the plan when it was adopted in May 2007. The City Council decided at that time to reconsider building height and density questions in the current study, while also putting a greater emphasis on the Palm Beach Boulevard commercial corridor and on the residential neighborhoods south to Billy's Creek²



Through the adoption of that plan in May 2007, the City was able to formally initiate a Community Redevelopment Area for East Fort Myers. The 2010 study was intended to update and replace the May 2007 plan as the official redevelopment plan for East Fort Myers. Most of the previous findings and proposals from the 2010 Plan have proven valid and have been incorporated into this document.

However, through Ordinance 3940, the City Council dissolved the East Fort Myers redevelopment area, as it was not beneficial for the City to maintain or keep the EFM CRA. Therefore, the redevelopment plan and trust fund were dissolved upon adoption of the Ordinance.

Prior to the dissolution of the redevelopment Plan it is important to know that two constants emerged as keys to redevelopment success for the target area:

Housing

In order to improve the quality of residential life for the citizens of the target area, single family neighborhoods should be protected from excessive noise, traffic and crime. To accomplish this task, dwellings may be graduated from the central business corridor.

Commercial

The revitalization of the central business corridor is necessary to maintain the economic viability of this area. The promotion of pedestrian traffic in this area will encourage continued patronage of the business establishments located here.

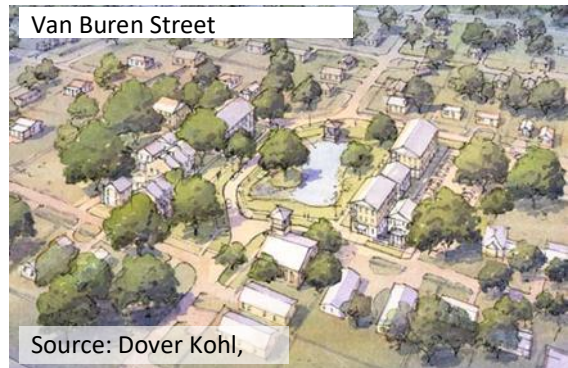
ANALYSIS OF MOST RECENT PLAN

The most recent East Fort Myers CRA Plan had developed guiding principles that set the stage for initiating the economic strategies that would best revitalize this area. They are described in a four point strategy as follows:

² Dover Kohl 2010 Plan

1. City of neighborhoods

East Fort Myers contains an ample inventory of empty lots and properties that are ready for redevelopment. While some investors and residents may be discouraged by creeping blight in recent years, such properties provide a rare opportunity not only to expand park but also to build in a way that contributes to the safety and economic vitality of the neighborhoods. Making neighborhoods more complete by filling in the gaps and improving social and physical conditions will strengthen the neighborhoods and increase community pride and identity. This will create compact and complete and sustainable neighborhoods. Van Buren Street area is reconnected around the pond and new homes front onto this memorable public space.



2. Build more quality development provide more mixed use development

Neighborhoods should contain not just houses, but a mix of uses that are adaptable for change over time. A variety of uses within a neighborhood creates the ability to live, work, shop and have some daily needs and services within walking distance. Housing for a mix of incomes should continue to be provided in East Fort Myers. A variety of building types allows for a diversity of family sizes, ages, and incomes to live in the same neighborhood. With high-quality development, growth and change can make things better rather than worse. The residents and business owners of East Fort Myers should demand and expect nothing less.



There are few points of public access to the Caloosahatchee River. The properties between Riverside Park and the Tarpon Street Pier have a unique opportunity to be redeveloped with a public promenade. This promenade would have important public

and private benefits and would add value to adjoining properties if they are redeveloped in a manner that takes advantage of this amenity, as shown in the illustration above.

3. Transform Palm Beach Boulevard to work for pedestrian and commercial entities

Palm Beach Boulevard is a central element that connects the neighborhoods of East Fort Myers and has the opportunity to become a signature grand boulevard. In order to accomplish this goal, there must be a change in mindset from viewing the corridor as simply an automobile-oriented thoroughfare for moving through-traffic to instead become a cherished component of the community. Rather than allowing it to do just one job,

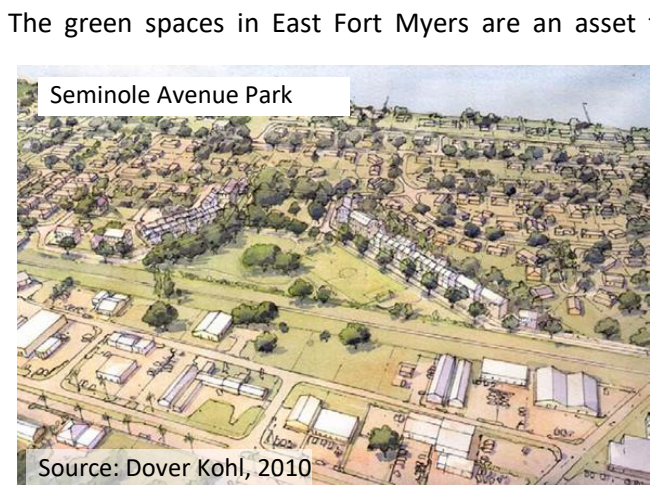
Conceptual Corsswalks throughout Palm Beach Boulevard Corridor



moving the maximum of through-going motorists, East Fort Myers residents and business owners can demand more from this important roadway – that it not only provide an excellent auto experience, but also an excellent walking, cycling, shopping, working, and living experience.

As design speeds are lowered along activity nodes at major intersections, such design changes can be the first step in transforming parts of Palm Beach Boulevard into a main street. A long-term goal would be to establish on street parking, and regulations that maximize redevelopment sites by minimizing setbacks and locating parking lots to the rear of the lot, out of site from those strolling, biking, or driving along Palm Beach Boulevard.

4. Connect the green spaces



Source: Dover Kohl, 2010

The green spaces in East Fort Myers are an asset to the community and have tremendous potential to improve over time. By introducing additional park spaces, both large and small, a green network can be assembled that improves the quality of life in the area and helps to create a more sustainable East Fort Myers. Improved public access to the Caloosahatchee River and Billy’s Creek will help to better connect residents to these important waterways. By planting street trees and

introducing sidewalks, the park spaces and waterways can be connected and easily accessed by East Fort Myers residents and visitors.

The redevelopment of the Seminole Avenue Park property should include new buildings facing onto the park.³

PUBLIC INPUT

The East Fort Myers residents and stakeholders input during the development of the plan consisted of several open house and workshop meetings scattered over an eight month time period. Attendance was slight to moderate; however, discussion was robust with a strong articulation of real and perceived needs within the East Fort Myers target area (see Appendix 6).



During the various meetings a survey was distributed asking participants to respond to questions ranging from “what was liked best in their community” to “what was liked least”. Also, the participants were asked about their perceptions of issues of concern in such areas as public safety, strength and weaknesses of the community. Throughout the public input meetings, various strategic areas needing improvement were brought up to the

participants in order to see whether they were still needed.

In addition to the residents and owners of businesses within the community redevelopment area, there were several representatives present at the input meeting that expressed the desire to bring new development to the CRA once it was reestablished. For example, the Rock Lake Motel development is proposed to be the site for a new 300 unit residential development pending the granting of certain TIF incentives. Another future development was said to be built near the Seaboard railroad location.



³ Dover Kohl, 2010

The four point strategy of redevelopment focus was first articulated by the authors of the 2010 EFMCR Plan⁴. These principles were soundly accepted by the attendees of the workshops/input sessions such that the 2023 redevelopment plan must continue to concentrate on these principles.

REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Any new plan is an encroachment into the residents' comfort zones; and although this comfort zone may be filled with crime, deteriorated housing units, and other code violations; it must still be considered a comfort zone. Any change will affect the people living there, and people react to change in many different ways. Therefore, including residents in the planning process is imperative.

The linkages between public, private and nonprofits are an important factor in redevelopment efforts, as well. The use of the services provided by many agencies, such as: health, job service, childcare, and education, among others, provides residents with a more inclusive feeling within the community. Used properly, the services can unleash the human potential of the neighborhood. Used improperly, and the residents become too dependent to become involved.

Therefore, any redevelopment must be both physical and social. But the goal should not be to create a community of clients, but to create a community of service: build up the human capacity of the neighborhood as you build up the physical environment. Build one without the other, and redevelopment fails. The long-term goal of any successful redevelopment plan should provide for the development of the physical environment, as well as for the development of the human capital within the neighborhood.

The following elements must be included in a redevelopment program if it is to be successful:

Public Involvement: The neighbors must be involved from the beginning and share the vision for the neighborhood. Citizens will actively support planning initiatives if they have been invited to participate and their concerns have been addressed.

Quality of The Built Environment: The plans must improve the quality of the residents' lives. They must feel comfortable in their neighborhoods, as well as in the City as a whole.

Neighborhood Centered: The residents are most affected by their immediate surroundings. Neighborhood centered planning can address issues that most affect quality of life situations. Planning on this scale is also more manageable and the results more immediate.

Political Process: It is also important to involve citizens in the larger picture. This will ensure that the elected officials will have input into the equitable allocation of scarce resources.

⁴ Dover Kohl 2010 Plan

Economic Element: Programs without funding are ineffective, to say the least. The fastest way to kill a planning program, which includes physical and social improvements, is by not providing funds, or under funding the program .

To ensure community ownership in redevelopment and neighborhood revitalization, neighborhood residents must be involved in every phase of the process. Their input on potential neighborhood resources, and solutions to residents’ concerns, is invaluable since the residents have more functional knowledge of their neighborhood dynamics and relationships. Neighborhood residents will also contribute long-term commitments to increasing their knowledge about how to create change in their neighborhood; engaging in planning, monitoring, and coordinating the implementation of these changes; and constructively advocating for community redevelopment projects.

The neighborhoods comprising the largest portion of the EFMCRRA exhibit convincing evidence of deteriorated conditions. The area includes a mix of aging residential and a few newer single family and multi-family housing units.

Commercial development also suffers from deteriorating conditions, including lack of adequate parking (for existing development), lack of adequate infrastructure such as drainage and sidewalks, and as noted above, often conflicts with adjacent residential development. The exception to this is the large shopping plazas which contain an overabundance of parking.

In addition, there are vacant lots that are overgrown and often serve as dumping grounds. Further, because these areas are representative of affordable housing, maintenance also becomes an issue. Homes that are in need of repair exist throughout the EFMCRRA. This is a function of the homeowner (or property owner) not having the funds to maintain the property to certain community standards.

Residential Market

The residential areas in the EFMCRRA have several problems that call for a concentrated redevelopment plan. Structural deterioration, vacancy, absentee ownership are typical conditions that exist throughout the area. Some units are substandard. Many, particularly along the corridor are incompatible with surrounding commercial or industrial use which further degrades the quality of life for the residents.

The median home value in Lee County is \$367,243. East Fort Myers home values have gone up 4.2% over the past year, with an average of \$250,203. The median list price per square foot in Fort Myers is \$226. This continues to be a factor in providing affordable units in the EFMCRRA.

Commercial Market

In 2021, the City contracted with Florida International University (FIU) to conduct a study, it was titled: *“Building Corridors of Opportunity: City of Fort Myers Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)”*. The purpose was to develop integrated short-term and long-range community economic

development strategies for the City’s major commercial corridors – Palm Beach Boulevard, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, US 41 (Cleveland Avenue), Fowler Street, Colonial Boulevard - and the surrounding residential communities. From the study:

An important goal of the CEDS is to make the City’s major commercial corridors more functional and efficient. However, in order to be functional and efficient commercial corridors need to create an identity. This can be a challenge as commercial corridors are commonly arterial streets defining neighborhood borders. They are typically seen as passing through neighborhoods rather than as integral neighborhood pieces contributing to livability. How easily and safely residents are able to get from one place to another has a major effect on a City’s quality of life. As such, the CEDS is viewed as a means of connecting people to economic opportunities, social activities, education, and healthcare while offering residents convenient, healthy, accessible, and low-cost alternatives to long commutes.⁵

The studies “key findings” include:

The following findings from the Competitive Assessment lay the groundwork for the *City of Fort Myers Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)*. The findings highlight five major topic areas: 1) Community Economic Development Post-COVID, 2) Building Corridors of Opportunity – A Diverse and Inclusive Economy, 3) The Dynamics of the Local Economy, 4) A Case for Manufacturing, and 5) Calculating the City’s Future Economic Growth amidst the Changing Geography of Work.

Due to unprecedented growth in Lee County over the past eight years, the City of Fort Myers is faced with a number of challenges. Given its competitive characteristics in terms of location and attractiveness, the City must be proactive in planning and managing to balance its established quality of life with strategic economic investments that will enhance the City’s competitiveness and increase prosperity for its local businesses and resident workforce. Structuring the right balance of new economic growth is crucial, so that the City does not become a “victim” of its own success.⁶

The study’s conclusion included identifying target industries for the EFMCR (as well as other corridors). The following strategies were identified:

1. Adopt a Clear Industry Focus
2. Focus on Small-Firm Growth
3. Create a Tailored and Formalized Workforce Development Initiative
4. Build an Accelerator Ecosystem
5. Support Active Work Shifting Strategies
6. Develop Affordable Housing Strategies Based on Local Demand

⁵ FIU City of Fort Myers Community Economic Development Strategy

⁶ FIU City of Fort Myers Community Economic Development Strategy

7. Provide Affordable Housing Development Programs Linked to Economic Development and Business Creation
8. Provide Land Use and Zoning Incentives
9. Adopt Clear Design Standards for Commercial Corridor Development Activity
10. Adopt a Multi-Point Marketing Strategy
11. Adopt Sustainable Economic Growth Metrics

Following the strategies identified by both the 2010 Redevelopment plan and the 2021 FIU study, the current plan will establish a renewed opportunity to bring about beneficial change in East Fort Myers.

IMPLEMENTATION

The success or failure of the Redevelopment Plan hinges on the ability of the City to stimulate reinvestment, undertake public improvement projects and to engender community support.

This section of the Plan identifies a series of implementation strategies which have the highest potential for aiding the EFM CRA in reaching these goals-

Through the public workshops and discussion, the following objectives were drawn up to guide redevelopment strategies. The objectives act as the CRA's values and provide a defined purpose and guidance for decision-making.

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OBJECTIVES

The following are general business practices and operational standards of the Community Redevelopment Agency. The City's CRA typically follows these objectives and operational standards. It is recommended that these objectives and operational policies be reviewed from time to time to ensure that they remain up to current redevelopment standards.

1. **Review return on investment on CRA projects.** Each CRA project must show its ability to increase property values and the tax base. An analysis of the potential for a return on investment should be included in staff reports on CRA projects.
2. **Conservative, fiscal driven growth.** CRA spending should be planned conservatively with adequate bids on projects contracted out to private companies. The CRA budget should be balanced, and any debt should be carefully considered.
3. **Ensure business friendly implementation of building and zoning codes.** Building and zoning codes provide an important role in protecting the health and safety of residents and property rights and

values. Predictable and efficient implementation of the building and zoning codes allow businesses to move forward and make investments.

4. **Enhance attractive, small town atmosphere for residents and visitors.** The charm of EFMCRRA is its casual, laid back atmosphere that is attractive for families and visitors. Improving the attractiveness and aesthetics will enhance community pride and attract new customers.
5. **Attract uses that serve the local community.** EFMCRRA residents enjoy patronizing local businesses and the community spirit gained by working, shopping, eating out, and recreating with neighbors near their homes. New uses should fit the needs of the East Fort Myers residents.
6. **Utilize Communities for lifetime principles.** Seniors are well-served by having medical, commercial, social, and recreational services nearby within the community. Diversifying uses and ensuring the availability of programming for seniors will allow EFMCRRA residents to comfortably “age in place.”
7. **Increase employment.** Providing jobs for EFMCRRA residents within the CRA enhances community and ensures additional private capital is invested within the City. Providing employment opportunities within the City increases the overall viability of the local economy.
8. **Enhance tax base.** Enhancing the tax base is the ultimate goal of the EFMCRRA. Improving property values in the CRA will allow the City to maintain its reduced millage rates. This will allow the tax burden to be more equitably spread out through the community.

THE REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

The projects and programs of the Community Redevelopment Agency are designed to solve underlying problems which have a blighting influence on the redevelopment area, satisfy basic needs of the populace or take advantage of opportunities for economic, social or aesthetic improvement. Overall redevelopment strategies of both the CRA and the City are embodied within these projects and programs undertaken by the CRA. Most of the projects and programs are ambitious; however, in order to improve the conditions of the target areas, considerable work has to be done. Granted, much of this work will be carried out over long periods of time and be constrained by the financial gains made within these target areas. But redevelopment is a long term process.

The following sections provide a detailed description of proposed projects and programs for which funding is provided or will be provided, by the Community Redevelopment Agency (and others as noted).

For organizational purposes, these projects and programs have been divided into three groups: Group "1": Planning; Group "2": Redevelopment; and Group "3": Community Improvement. This organizational structure is not, however meant to be mutually exclusive, since many projects contain components, which fit into more than one category.

Group "1": Planning

"Community Redevelopment Area Planning"

The general planning program discussed below intends to provide the framework for future studies and evaluations of specific issues in the CRA Redevelopment Area.

Project Objectives

- Update the CRA Redevelopment Plan as necessary to incorporate new information and changed conditions.
- Continue the planning process to improve long range strategies.
- Support the City's planning efforts.
- Provide a basis for new ideas and research for grants.
- Identify new issues which may arise which meet the objectives of the CRA.
- Encourage both affordable housing and market rate housing in the district.
- Study the opportunities for the creation of public open spaces.
- Promote historic preservation.
- Increase employment and business opportunities in the area.

- Improve street appearance by beautification.

Project Description

- Study the parking needs, issues, and requirements, including retaining parking consultants, particularly the vacant parking in large shopping plazas .
- Evaluate automobile and pedestrian traffic patterns and make recommendations for improving roadways and walkways, particularly the location of sidewalks.
- Provide support for a historic building survey in the Redevelopment Area.
- Create a program for encouraging the preservation of historic structures, including utilizing adaptive reuse.
- Review building codes, zoning regulations and land development regulations to improve the redevelopment process and implementation, particularly housing and nonconforming structures.
- Create design guidelines in sub-areas or neighborhoods to encourage quality development.
- Identify important structures and properties for acquisition and redevelopment.
- Identify infrastructure requirements which will be needed to accommodate the ultimate level of development intensity.
- Review long-range infrastructure needs.
- Increase housing opportunities, both affordable home ownership in the neighborhoods and market rate housing.
- Encourage minority business development.

Project Participants and Administration

- The Community Redevelopment Agency and the City of Fort Myers will administer the planning activities. The City will provide the staff support for planning services.
- Other participants in the program may include, but are not limited to, the County, the Regional Planning Council, homeowner associations, businesses, citizens and elected officials.

Funding Sources

- The CRA, the City and others, as appropriate, will provide funding for staff support and professional consultants.

Project Schedule

- **Short-term:**
 - Completion and adoption of the CRA Plan in FY 2023/24.
 - Begin implementation of wayfinding and gateways in FY 2023/24 or as funds become available.

- **Mid-term:**

- Historic building survey FY 2024/25 or as funds become available.
- Future revisions to the CRA Plan will be made as required and planning for specific issues will be made as required.

Group “2”: Redevelopment

2.1 “Affordable Housing”

The City and the CRA have a goal of improving the Redevelopment Area. This area has many positive attributes including historic structures and affordable homes, but the area is also blighted, dominated by rental housing and in a state of disinvestment. In many instances, single family homes are located close to commercially zoned land or immediately adjacent to commercial businesses. If a prospective homebuyer were to evaluate the area as a potential site for a home, it would be clear that the cost of rehabilitating an older home together with the purchase price would exceed the fair market value of the home after renovations. The fact that many of these homes exist without any buffer between them and commercial businesses is also a deterrent. In addition, there are a substantial number of vacant lots in the area.

The overall objective is to invigorate the neighborhood with new homebuyers and establish the area as a viable home ownership community.

Project Objectives

- Provide decent, affordable housing for residents who are of low to moderate-income level.
- Stabilize and preserve the neighborhoods through redevelopment and the elimination of slum and blight.
- Encourage fee simple home ownership.
- Encourage multi-family structures in the neighborhood as buffers between commercial and residential.

Project Description

- The target area for establishing affordable housing is generally the area just north and south of the Palm Beach Boulevard corridor. These areas have the potential for the highest incompatibility with commercial properties. However, all of the CRA must be considered a target area.
- The details of the program may be set forth in program guidelines adopted by the CRA. Components of the program may include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Home Buyer Assistance (subsidies secured by CRA soft junior mortgages).
 - Credit Enhancement for Builders through loan guarantees for a portion of construction loans for speculative homes.

- Homebuyer's marketing program.
 - Referral of prospective homebuyers to other agencies, which provide education on home ownership and credit repair.
 - Architectural and engineering design assistance to builders, homebuyers, and non-profits at no or minimal cost.
 - CRA acquisition of vacant residential lots and residences for resale and development or redevelopment.
 - Apply for grants and other aid to enhance the program including economic development, credit repair, beautification projects and administration.
 - Provide grants to homebuyers converting multi-family structures to single-family home ownership.
 - Provide additional incentives for all employees of the City who purchase structures for single-family home ownership.
 - Provide additional incentives to historic structures.
- The CRA may also provide the above services as part of a joint program between other public and private sector participants.
 - The CRA may also provide, on a temporary basis, vacant lots leased to the City or neighborhood associations for use as community gardens, open space, or neighborhood parks.
 - Provide architectural and engineering design for sample affordable housing structures, including the issuance of a design competition.

Project Participants and Administration

- Participants may include, but are not limited to, the CRA, private developers/homebuilders, non-profit housing sponsors, homebuyers, lending institutions, the City, the County, the Housing Authority, and other foundations, the State of Florida Housing Finance Agency, and public/private sponsors.
- The roles and the various participants will be set forth in the program guidelines adopted by the CRA.

Funding Sources

- Funding of the program elements, for which the CRA is responsible, will be provided by the CRA.
- Other potential funding sources include, but are not limited to, Local, State and Federal Governmental Grants, and private contributions.

Project Schedule

- **Short-term:**
 - Programs will be initiated (programs developed and marketed) in FY 2024, or as funds become available.

- **Long-term:**

- Acquisition, architectural and engineering services.

2.2 “Residential Infill Redevelopment”

The City and CRA as part of their long range strategy for redevelopment should encourage private development on infill sites in all areas of the Redevelopment Area.

Project Objectives

- Provide economic stimulation and private investment.
- Assemble a site large enough for small, medium and large-scale projects.
- Improve marketability and demand for retail uses.
- Increase nighttime activity in the commercial areas.
- Provide housing opportunities, both affordable and market-rate.
- Eliminate blighting influences.
- Create jobs in areas suitable for employment opportunities.

“Infill development is smart growth, and done well, has broad benefits for everyone in the neighborhood.”

(Matt Hutchins AIA/CAST architecture)



Infill Development Example

Project Description

- Development of mixed-use redevelopment projects, housing projects and commercial revitalization projects, where appropriate.
- The CRA will develop incentives to attract major tenant(s) including but not limited to financial assistance for parking, architectural design, off-site infrastructure, construction, and others.
- The CRA may offer incentives to encourage mixed-use projects including but not limited to financial assistance for parking, architectural design, off-site infrastructure, and others. Refer to other incentive programs in the Plan for a more detailed description of potential incentives.
- The CRA and City will study building, zoning and other land development regulations for infill buildings and make recommendations to the City Council for changes to the respective codes in order to encourage infill development.
- The CRA will acquire infill sites for the purpose of reselling to the private sector. The sites may require multiple acquisitions, demolition of structures, environmental clean-up, site planning analysis, market research and other investigation by the CRA in order to enhance the sale of sites.

Project Participants and Administration

- The project will be administered and coordinated by the CRA.
- Other participants may include, but are not limited to, the City, the County, merchants associations, major tenant(s), purchasers, and project developers.

Funding Sources

- With respect to public investments the CRA, the City and others, as appropriate, will provide the funding for incentives, technical assistance, land acquisition and other.
- With respect to private investments funding sources for redevelopment will be provided by the developer, tenants, and property owners as appropriate.

Project Schedule

- **Short-term:**
 - Much of the program (code review and incentive development) will be implemented in FY 2024, or as funds become available.
- **Long-term:**
 - Acquisition, site planning and incentives will be a long-term program.

2.3 “Main Street Improvement Program”

Project Objectives

- Provide economic stimulation and increase investment.
- Increase nighttime activity.
- Improve visual appearance of existing structures, pedestrian access to businesses and vehicle access to parking areas.
- Strengthen the relationship between parking areas and destinations for workers and visitors.

Project Description

- Creation of EFMCR historic district.
- Establish a sign program, including regulations, and design guidelines.
- Continue the improvement of streets, alleys, and other rights of way improvements.
- Establish a sidewalk vendors program, including a separate location for food truck vendors.
- Study the establishment of an area-wide free “Wi-Fi” system for homeowners, businesses, and visitors.
- Continue to provide grants and loans for façade improvements to properties.
- Establish a program for “art in public places.”
- Provide grants and loans to property owners to correct code deficiencies in existing structures.

- Provide grants and loans for the redevelopment of historic structures.
- Provide financial assistance for the development of parking lots and structured parking, for public and private spaces.
- Establish a street banner program.
- Provide architectural and planning assistance to private and public projects.

Project Participants and Administration

- The project will be administered and coordinated by the City and the CRA jointly.
- Other participants may include, but are not limited to, the County, the Chamber of Commerce, property owners, business owners and new project tenants and developers.

Funding Sources

- Funding of the program elements, for which the CRA and/or the City are responsible, will be provided by the CRA and the City.
- Other potential funding sources include, but are not limited to, the County, State and Federal Governments, businesses, and private contributions.

Project Schedule

- **Short-term:**
 - The program will commence in FY 2026 or as funds become available.

2.4 “Neighborhood Improvement Program”

Project Objectives

- Elimination of blighting influences.
- Physical and economic revitalization of the neighborhoods.
- Increase resident participation in the revitalization process.
- Promote historic preservation and maintain the historic character of the neighborhood.
- Encourage a mix of income groups in the residential areas.
- Improve the appearance of the area.
- Improve infrastructure in the area.
- Improve safety for residents and their guests.
- Improve visual appearance of existing structures.
- Improve the livability of the neighborhoods.
- Promote home ownership.

Project Description

- Establish a program of neighborhood associations to carry out the objectives of the program including acquisition of blighted property for redevelopment and neighborhood code enforcement.
- Acquire problem properties, rehabilitate, and resell to homebuyers.
- Establish a maintenance and clean-up program to eliminate trash, unsightly structures, and other blighting influences.
- Provide grants and loans for correcting code issues in historic buildings.
- Acquire single family and multi-family structures for conversion to single-family home ownership.
- Provide grants and loans to homebuyers for rehabilitating blighted and/or historic residential structures for home ownership.
- Establish a special incentive program for city employees to acquire residential structures in the neighborhoods for home ownership. The incentives include, but are not limited to, low interest loans for acquisition and rehabilitation, grants and loans for conversion of multi-family structures to single family, down payment assistance, and architectural, engineering and planning assistance.
- Provide home improvement grants for correcting code deficiencies.
- Provide architectural assistance for new construction and rehabilitation of existing structures.
- Provide architectural and engineering design for sample affordable and market rate housing structures, including the issuance of a design competition for obtaining architectural designs.

Project Participants and Administration

- The project will be administered and coordinated by the City and the CRA jointly.
- Other participants may include, but are not limited to, the County, property owners associations, Chamber of Commerce, builders, residents, homebuyers, lending institutions, the Housing Authority, and non-profit housing sponsors.

Funding Sources

- The CRA and the City will provide funding of the program elements, for which the CRA and/or the City are responsible.
- Other potential funding sources include, but are not limited to, the County, State and Federal Governments, businesses, banks, builders, homebuyers, and private contributions.

Project Schedule

- **Short-term:**
 - The program will commence in FY 2025/26, or as funds become available.

2.5 “Historic Preservation Program”

Historic downtowns and neighborhoods possess those elements that create livable, viable, communities by encouraging mixed-use and more compact development. The benefits of historic preservation are numerous. Historic neighborhoods and historic commercial areas feature buildings and homes built close to the street. Abundant sidewalks and the proliferation of front porches create a pedestrian friendly environment. This creates an increase of social interaction that not only is good for creating a sense of community but also increases the “eyes on the street,” which in turn results in a reduction of crime. Historic preservation makes good economic sense as well. Because historic preservation deals with the redevelopment of areas already equipped with infrastructure, there is no need for taxpayers to spend more of their dollars on new streets, water lines, schools, and police and fire services (unless upgrading obsolete structures).

Historic neighborhoods have traditionally proved themselves to stabilize and even increase property values. There are environmental benefits as well. Having shops and offices located near homes encourages pedestrian activity. Becoming less dependent on automobiles helps to reduce the amount of air pollution they create. Redevelopment of city cores also helps to reduce the amount of rural and undeveloped land from being needlessly used. Cities will also have some kind of socio-economic problems that revolve around vacant lots, properties overrun with vagrants, and places of drug activity. Some solutions such as demolition or condemnation do nothing to improve that property’s value, but simply create more vacant lots. More than any other method, historic preservation has proven to be most effective in fostering civic pride among those neighbors and encouraging the revitalization of blighted areas. There is also an educational benefit to historic preservation. Having the buildings and homes of our past with us today bring history lessons “alive”, serve as physical evidence, and are tangible tools that people can associate historic moments with.

Project Objectives

- Preserve the heritage of East Fort Myers.
- Use historic preservation as a tool for economic development.
- Utilize historic preservation to combat and eliminate blight.
- Encourage residential restoration of historic buildings.
- Maintain and restore all public historic buildings.
- Encourage the compatibility of historic structures and new structures in residential and commercial areas.
- Utilize the historical architectural styles of East Fort Myers as a reference for new construction styles.
- Provide sites for historic buildings displaced by redevelopment.

Project Description

- The CRA will purchase vacant lots for use for sites for historic homes displaced by redevelopment in the CRA district, if feasible.
- Support historic building renovation standards that meet both the Department of Interior Standards and the City's building codes.
- Prioritize façade grants for historic façade restoration, including the taking façade easements in return for such incentives. Any structure receiving assistance by the CRA and/or City must be listed on the local historic preservation register.
- Provide grants and loans for parking facilities for commercial historic structures, which are in need of assistance.
- Review and recommend changes to the building codes, zoning codes and other land development regulations for adaptive reuse and renovation of existing historic structures.
- Provide architectural, engineering and planning assistance to the private and public sector for historic preservation projects.
- Acquire historic buildings, which are threatened by decay and/or demolition and provide, if required, structural and façade improvements in order to maintain the historic integrity of a structure and resell to the private or public sector for redevelopment.
- Acquire historic buildings, which are underutilized and are ripe for redevelopment. The CRA may provide, if required, structural and façade improvements in order to maintain the historic integrity of a structure and resell it to the private or public sector for redevelopment.
- Acquire land for purposes of adding property to a historic redevelopment project for parking and open space.
- Acquire land for the purpose of providing a site for any historic structure threatened by demolition. The program will include the acquisition of the threatened structure, the moving of the structure to a new site and the construction of adequate foundation for the structure. The CRA may provide, if required, structural and façade improvements in order to maintain the historic integrity of a structure and resell it to the private or public sector for redevelopment.
- Provide incentives to businesses located in historic structures.

Project Participants and Administration

- The project will be administered and coordinated by the CRA but the City will play an active part in the program.
- Other participants may include, but are not limited to, the County, the State of Florida, preservation organizations, developers, residents, retail and business tenants, lending institutions, and the state and federal government.

Funding Sources

- The CRA and the City will provide funding of the program elements, for which the CRA and/or the City are responsible, respectively.

- Other potential funding sources include, but are not limited to, the County, State and Federal Governments, businesses, banks, builders, homebuyers, foundations, and private contributions.

Project Schedule

- **Short-term:**

- Providing a CRA-wide historic building survey should commence in FY 2025/26.

- **Mid-term:**

- New elements of the program will commence in FY 2027, or as funds become available.

2.6 “Façade Improvement Grant Program”

The Fort Myers CRA has a program called the Commercial Property Improvement Program. The Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program is a matching grant for commercial property owners and businesses within Fort Myers commercial redevelopment areas.

- The grant funds should enhance the project’s quality, the overall curb appeal of the property, and, ultimately, the property values along the corridor. This program’s desired outcomes and objectives are to encourage improvements that may not have occurred without the additional grant funds.
- The maximum potential grant available for a Tier I project is 75% of eligible expenditures, with a maximum award of \$50,000.
- The maximum potential grant available for a Tier II project is 50% of eligible expenditures, with a maximum award of \$200,000.

Project Objectives

- Elimination of blighting influences;
- Physical and economic revitalization of the neighborhoods and commercial areas;
- Promote historic preservation and maintain the historic character of both neighborhood and commercial areas;
- Improve visual appearance of existing structures;
- Provide grants and loans for correcting code issues;
- Improve the appearance of the area; and
- Improve safety for residents, shoppers, and tourists.

Project Description

- Establish a program with the Advisory Committee to carry out the objectives of the program and participation in the program.

Project Participants and Administration

- The project will be administered and coordinated by the CRA; and other participants may include, but are not limited to developers and builders, residents, homebuyers, lending institutions, and property owners.

Funding Sources

- The CRA will provide funding of the program elements; other potential funding sources include, but are not limited to the County, State and Federal Governments, businesses, banks, builders, homebuyers, and private contributions.

Project Schedule

- The program is ongoing

Group “3”: Community Improvement Programs

3.1: “Small Business Development and Lending Program”

In anticipation of an increase in the private investment cycle, the CRA believes that access to capital and technical expertise will be important for the future entrepreneurs. Therefore, this program has been created to assist the smaller entrepreneurs, even those that have little experience but wish to open a new business. It is considered by experienced building owners that one’s best prospects for vacant space can often be found at your own doorsteps. Some of the future tenants and developers of Fort Myers will be those who reside in the community and have a stake in seeing it improve.

The intent of one part of this program is to develop a pool of money from one or more local banks, which could be used to provide loans to Community Redevelopment Area businesses for expansion or the establishment of a new business. As an incentive and inducement, the CRA may assist borrowers by buying down the interest rate that banks charge and effectively enable the lenders to make low interest loans.

Project Objectives

- To enhance the physical appearance of the CRA District.
- To eliminate and prevent the spread of slum and blighted conditions.
- Create incentive for spin-off investment within the Area.
- Increase investment within current CRA projects.
- Stimulate new business activity.

- Educate the new entrepreneurs of the future.
- Attract new industry to the Area.

Project Description

- Provide funds for a subsidized loan pool for businesses to make permanently fixed interior and exterior improvements; and, to landlords/building owners to make permanently fixed interior and exterior improvements in preparation for lease to business tenants or to make additions to their structures as part of a business expansion.
- The CRA will maintain policy guidelines regarding loan limits, subsidy levels, project eligibility and list of qualified improvements.
- Matching grants to entrepreneurs for business development courses at an approved educational institution.
- Grants for training the workforce to attract new industry to locate in the CRA Area.
- Support a mentoring program for entrepreneurs where established businesses provide a watch over a new business.
- Work with the Lee County Economic Development Office for Workforce Training and Certification Program.

Project Participants and Administration

- The program will be administered and coordinated by the CRA.

Funding Sources

- The CRA will provide an initial allocation in their FY 2026/27 budget.
- Additional program allocations shall be determined annually during the budget process or at the discretion of the CRA on an as-needed basis to maintain the loan pool.
- Grants will be sought for training and education.

Project Schedule

- **Mid to long-term:**
 - The Program will be implemented in FY 2026/27, or as funds become available.

3.2 “Site and Building Development Assistance Program”

In order to assist private sector redevelopment efforts, the CRA, through an annual allocation of funds (as funds become available), will provide assistance for site development on a case-by case basis for private development and redevelopment projects, including site design, architectural, and engineering services.

Project Objectives

- Encourage private redevelopment initiatives by providing assistance to overcome technical, administrative and economic obstacles to the site development of selected projects within the Community Redevelopment Area.
- Increase investment within current CRA projects.
- Provide economic stimulation and increase investment in the Area.

Project Description

- This program incorporates the CRA's Tax Increment Rebate Program as one tool available.
- Use of the allocated funds for individual projects shall be solely at the discretion of the CRA and the Board may set from time to time a series of policies and guidelines for the program.
- Use of Loans, Grants, and direct contracting of work by the CRA for site development purposes.
- In order to preserve the City's historic heritage, the CRA may provide grants for the relocation of historic structures. These grants may be paid to the property owner in annual installments, equal to a percentage of the Tax Increment Revenue received by the CRA due to the increased assessment on the property where the structure has been relocated. The CRA Board will maintain Policy guidelines regarding grant limits, annual payment amounts (based on percentage of TIF revenue), and the time frame over which grant is to be paid.
- In order to assist larger redevelopment projects, the CRA may also provide the following:
 - Grants to developers paid in annual installments, equal to a percentage of the Tax Increment Revenue received by the CRA due to the increased assessment on the property. This is consistent with the CRA's existing Tax Rebate program under 3.3.
 - Credit enhancement to developers wherein the CRA pledges its full faith and credit to the developer's lender for payment of a portion of the loan. The enhancement may be a percentage of the loan amount or may be a pledge to provide adequate debt service coverage.
 - In order to qualify for either the grant or the credit enhancement, a redevelopment project must reinforce the overall CRA redevelopment effort. This may occur by creating jobs, increasing surrounding property values, preserving a historical structure, providing a cultural amenity or by any other means approved by the CRA Board.
 - The CRA Board will maintain Policy guidelines regarding grant limits, annual payment amounts (based on percentage of TIF revenue), and the time frame over which grant is to be paid.
 - The CRA Board will maintain Policy guidelines regarding credit enhancement including the amount, time limitations and other issues.
- Provide architectural design fees to projects selected by the Board. The CRA Board will maintain policy guidelines regarding grant limits, annual payment amounts, and the time frame over which grant is to be paid.

- Provide a grant or perform directly for structural analysis, fire code deficiencies, handicap accessibility issues, and other building code issues and/or repair of items found in the analysis of existing buildings selected by the CRA.
- Provide parking and traffic analysis of selected projects and provide subsidies including financial assistance for construction and maintenance. Part of the criteria for selecting a project for assistance is the ability to jointly share the use of parking by the public on off-peak times.
- Provide grants and loans for utility relocation if the relocation is deemed critical to the economic feasibility of the project and if the relocation results in an enhanced site design.
- Provide grants and loans to businesses for the purpose of attracting the business to the CRA Area and for moving existing business because of expansion or because the moving results in attracting an additional business for the CRA Area.
- Provide water and sewer impact and connection fee assistance for selected projects.
- Provide environmental clean-up assistance for selected projects.

Project Participants and Administration

- The program is administered by the CRA.
- Other participants may include, but are not limited to, property owners and project developers and investors.

Funding Sources

- The CRA will provide the funding for the program but may borrow funds from the City as required and approved by the City.
- Program allocations shall be determined annually during the budget process or at the discretion of the CRA.
- Utilize grants such as CDBG initially until the program can be self- supporting from tax increment revenue.

Project Schedule

- **Mid to long-term:**
 - Program will be implemented beginning in FY2026/27, and fully implemented as funding becomes available.

3.3: “Tax Increment Rebate Program”

As a matter of policy, the Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) will consider using TIF to assist private development in those circumstances where the proposed private project shows a demonstrated financial gap and that the financial assistance request is the minimum necessary to make the project feasible. The developer is expected to have exhausted every other financial alternative(s) prior to requesting the use of TIF, including equity participation, other federal and state funds, bonds, tax credits, loans, etc.

It is the intent of the CRA to provide the minimum amount of TIF assistance to make the project viable and not solely to broaden a developer's profit margin on the project. Prior to consideration of a Tax Increment Rebate (Rebate) request, the CRA will undertake (at the requestor's cost) an independent analysis of the project to ensure the request for assistance is valid.

Please see the program requirements at the CRA's website: fortmyerscra.com

3.4: "Community Activities Sponsorship Program"

Since the programs and projects of the CRA have a direct impact on the residents of the district, the CRA must consider the problems, needs and desires of the people in its project decision-making process. Therefore, it is important to maintain an open line of communication between the agency and the residents. Expenditures for community projects and events, which further the goals of the CRA, are necessary from time to time to maintain and promote the CRA's role in community redevelopment.

Program Objectives

- Maintain a positive and involved role within the community.
- Further the goals of the CRA through participation of community events.

Program Description

- Promote and sponsor community events, projects and programs which will lead to stabilization and expansion of the economic environment within commercial and residential areas, revitalization and rehabilitation of the existing housing supply or further other basic goals of the CRA.

Program Participants and Administration

- The project will be administered by the CRA.
- Other participants may include, but are not limited to, community groups and organizations, public bodies and private not-for-profit corporations.

Funding Sources

- The CRA will provide the funding for the program.
- Program allocations shall be determined annually during the budget process or at the discretion of the CRA but shall not exceed a limit determined by the CRA Board in each annual budget.

Program Schedule

- On-going:

3.5: "Business Development Program"

Increasing economic activity within the Community Redevelopment Area is a major objective of the overall Community Redevelopment Program. Investments by the CRA which result in increased business opportunities have positive impacts on employment, the tax base, and the physical environment, all of which are positive steps toward the elimination of slum and blighted conditions. Many other CRA programs are aimed at increasing economic activity within the CRA district. The purpose of this "Business Development Program" is to provide a means to focus the effort. The primary goal of the program is to facilitate small business development within the Community Redevelopment Area. Types of businesses to be encouraged are detailed in the Florida International University's study and include target industries:

Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services

Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services

Computer Systems Design and Related Services

Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories

Electric Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution

Scientific Research and Development Services

Medical Equipment and Supplies Manufacturing

Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services

The program will encourage and assist businesses by providing assistance during the crucial first year of operation or expansion. The program will provide additional benefits to the local economy by helping to eliminate some of the vacant commercial space within the area. This not only improves the overall appearance of the area, but also contributes toward the development of a critical mass of activity, whereby individual businesses draw additional customers for each other.

Program Objectives

- Provide economic stimulation to the area.
- Increase business opportunities.
- Increase employment opportunities.
- Decrease unoccupied commercial space within the area.
- Prevent the spread of slum and blighted conditions.

Program Description

- Provide business rental subsidies for the first year of multi-year leases.

- Although at the discretion of the CRA, generally the rental subsidy shall not be given when total rent, including subsidy exceeds the fair market rent for the area.
- Additional items toward which financial support may be given include, but are not limited to, security deposits, last month rental deposit, utility deposits, advertisement, signage, licenses, and legal assistance.
- The CRA Board shall maintain policy guidelines regarding types of assistance, funding limits and eligibility requirements.
- Although the CRA shall make its decision on a case-by-case basis, generally assistance shall not be given for uses which do not reinforce and further the redevelopment strategy and goals for the geographic sub-area in which they are located or are non-conforming with regards to the City's Land Development Regulations.

Program Participants and Administration

- The program will be administered and coordinated by the CRA.
- Other participants include Local, County, State and Federal Agencies, Chamber of Commerce, non-profits, banks, private foundations, businesses, and landlords.

Funding Sources

- Funding for the program will be by the CRA, the City, the County, Chamber of Commerce, banks, and others as appropriate.

Program Schedule

- **Mid to long-term:**
 - The Program will be implemented in FY 2026/27, or as funds become available.

3.6“Grant Administration Program”

To facilitate additional investment within the Community Redevelopment area, the CRA will administer grants, which complement the redevelopment efforts of the CRA and the goals of the Community Redevelopment Plan. It is anticipated that this additional investment within the CRA district will result in increased opportunities for residents and have positive impacts on employment, housing, the tax base, and the physical environment, all of which are positive steps toward the elimination of slum and blighted conditions.

Program Objectives

- Provide economic stimulation to the area.
- Increase business opportunities.
- Increase employment opportunities.
- Increase housing opportunities.

Program Description

The CRA may apply for, accept, and administer grants from Federal, State, and local governmental entities, charitable foundations and entities, and such other organizations as may offer grant funds for the planning and carrying out of redevelopment efforts in pursuit of the purposes of the Community Redevelopment Plan.

Program Participants and Administration

- The program will be administered and coordinated by the CRA with the City as a joint venture partner, if required.
- Other participants include, but are not limited to, Federal, State, and local governmental entities, the Housing Authority, charitable foundations and entities, and such other organizations as may offer grant funds, and organizations, businesses or individuals who may participate in the program to receive such grant funds.

Funding Sources

- Federal, State, and local governmental entities, charitable foundations and entities, and such other organizations as may offer grant funds.

Program Schedule

- On-going:

3.7: “Public Space and Public Property Improvement Program”

The City must pay close attention to the detail of public space in all of its public works projects. The City and the CRA as a partner must encourage the development of public open space. This program is designed to enhance the public spaces created on public property but also is designed to encourage private developers to create public spaces on their projects as well.

Project Objectives

- Enlarge the public open space for residents of the East Fort Myers CRA.
- Improve the quality of life for the residents.
- Provide recreation in open spaces.
- Provide more public access to the water.
- Provide improved public facilities for the residents.

Project Description

- Solicit grants and loans for public space improvement on both public land and private land. These improvements may include but are not limited to design, parking, lighting, landscaping, signage, access road improvements, art in public spaces, utilities, restroom facilities, plazas, bicycle pathways, and park furniture.

- Acquire land for public open space for use as recreation.
- Enhance communication within public spaces with signage, lighting, markers, and sound systems.

Project Participants and Administration

- The project will be supported by the CRA but the City will play an active part in the program.
- Other participants may include, but are not limited to, the County, Chamber of Commerce, developers, residents, retail and business tenants, lending institutions, and the state and federal government.

Funding Sources

- The CRA and the City will provide funding of the program elements, for which the CRA and/or the City are responsible, respectively.
- Other potential funding sources include, but are not limited to, the County, State and Federal Governments, FDOT, businesses, banks, builders, homebuyers, foundations, and private contributions.

Project Schedule

- **Mid to long-term:**
 - Elements of the program will commence in FY 2026/27 and others will follow, as funds become available.

3.8 “Community Marketing and Promotion”

The CRA or other organizations must take on the role of promoting the community, particularly its commercial area, much like a “Main Street” organization. Main Street is a particular type of organization, founded by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and its strategies include a program for design standards for the community and programs for promotion of the community through holding events and advertising. Main Street has been an effective organization in many parts of Florida. The CRA would assist in developing an organization to carry out a Main Street-type program.

Project Objectives

- Physical and economic revitalization of the community;
- Enhance the pedestrian nature of community streets;
- Assist in promoting the community as a destination;
- Recruit businesses to relocate to the community;
- Market the unique qualities of the historic community; and
- Revitalize the neighborhood retail.

Project Description

- Support the creation and administration of a Main Street-type program;

- Provide grants and loans for the marketing of the community including events, advertising, and other media;
- Support business recruitment for the community;
- Provide grants and loans for murals and art works;
- Provide matching grants and loans for redevelopment; and
- Provide incentives for businesses and property owners.

Project Participants and Administration

- The CRA shall generally administer and coordinate the program;
- The CRA may participate through the utilization of its unique powers and financial resources as appropriate for selected elements of the Program; and
- Other participants may include, but are not limited to, the Advisory Committee, the City, the County, the Chamber of Commerce, business owners, and property owners.

Funding Sources

- Funding of the program elements, for which the CRA is responsible, will be provided by the CRA;
- Funding of the program elements, for which the County or the State is responsible, will be provided by the County and the State; and
- Other potential funding sources include, but are not limited to State and Federal Governments, members, businesses, and private contributions.

Project Schedule

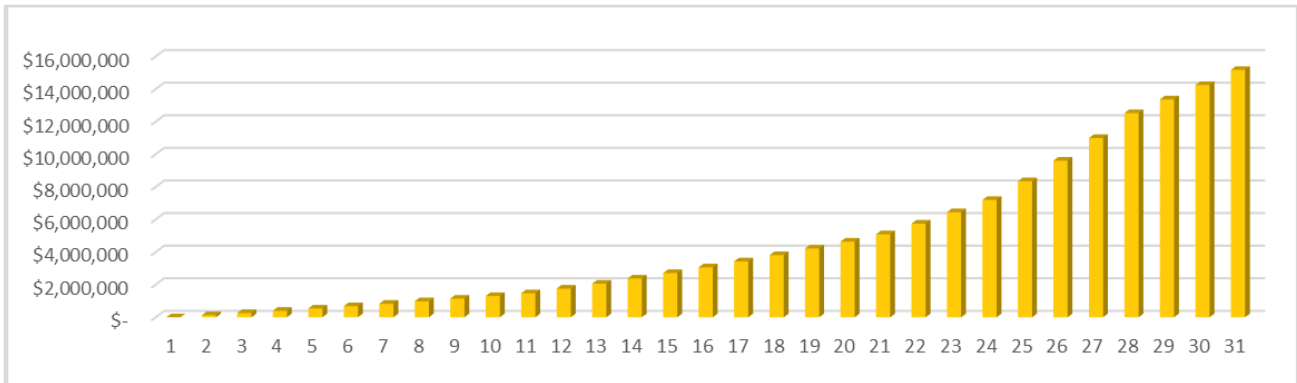
- Short-term
 - The program will begin its organization in FY 2026/27, or as funding becomes available.

TAX INCREMENT PROJECTIONS

CRA TAX INCREMENTS OVER TIME

Tax Year	Year	Taxable Value	% Annual Change	Taxable Value For Increment	Millage Rate City	Millage Rate County	Total CRA Millage Rate	Tax Increment	Statutory Increment %	CRA Tax Increment	Cumulative CRA Tax Increment Since Base Year
2023	Base Year	\$ 397,073,676		\$ -	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ -	95%	\$ -	
2024	Year 1	\$ 408,985,886	3%	\$ 11,912,210	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 135,174	95%	\$ 128,415	\$ 128,415
2025	Year 2	\$ 421,255,463	3%	\$ 24,181,787	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 274,403	95%	\$ 260,683	\$ 389,098
2026	Year 3	\$ 433,893,127	3%	\$ 36,819,451	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 417,809	95%	\$ 396,918	\$ 786,016
2027	Year 4	\$ 446,909,921	3%	\$ 49,836,245	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 565,517	95%	\$ 537,241	\$ 1,323,257
2028	Year 5	\$ 460,317,218	3%	\$ 63,243,542	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 717,656	95%	\$ 681,773	\$ 2,005,030
2029	Year 6	\$ 474,126,735	3%	\$ 77,053,059	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 874,360	95%	\$ 830,642	\$ 2,835,672
2030	Year 7	\$ 488,350,537	3%	\$ 91,276,861	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 1,035,764	95%	\$ 983,976	\$ 3,819,648
2031	Year 8	\$ 503,001,053	3%	\$ 105,927,377	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 1,202,011	95%	\$ 1,141,910	\$ 4,961,558
2032	Year 9	\$ 518,091,084	3%	\$ 121,017,408	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 1,373,245	95%	\$ 1,304,583	\$ 6,266,141
2033	Year 10	\$ 533,633,817	3%	\$ 136,560,141	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 1,549,616	95%	\$ 1,472,135	\$ 7,738,276
2034	Year 11	\$ 560,315,508	5%	\$ 163,241,832	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 1,852,387	95%	\$ 1,759,767	\$ 9,498,043
2035	Year 12	\$ 588,331,283	5%	\$ 191,257,607	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 2,170,296	95%	\$ 2,061,781	\$ 11,559,824
2036	Year 13	\$ 617,747,847	5%	\$ 220,674,171	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 2,504,100	95%	\$ 2,378,895	\$ 13,938,719
2037	Year 14	\$ 648,635,240	5%	\$ 251,561,564	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 2,854,595	95%	\$ 2,711,865	\$ 16,650,584
2038	Year 15	\$ 681,067,002	5%	\$ 283,993,326	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 3,222,614	95%	\$ 3,061,484	\$ 19,712,068
2039	Year 16	\$ 715,120,352	5%	\$ 318,046,676	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 3,609,035	95%	\$ 3,428,583	\$ 23,140,651
2040	Year 17	\$ 750,876,369	5%	\$ 353,802,693	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 4,014,776	95%	\$ 3,814,037	\$ 26,954,688
2041	Year 18	\$ 788,420,188	5%	\$ 391,346,512	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 4,440,805	95%	\$ 4,218,764	\$ 31,173,452
2042	Year 19	\$ 827,841,197	5%	\$ 430,767,521	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 4,888,134	95%	\$ 4,643,728	\$ 35,817,180
2043	Year 20	\$ 869,233,257	5%	\$ 472,159,581	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 5,357,831	95%	\$ 5,089,939	\$ 40,907,119
2044	Year 21	\$ 930,079,585	7%	\$ 533,005,909	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 6,048,285	95%	\$ 5,745,870	\$ 46,652,989
2045	Year 22	\$ 995,185,156	7%	\$ 598,111,480	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 6,787,070	95%	\$ 6,447,717	\$ 53,100,706
2046	Year 23	\$ 1,064,848,117	7%	\$ 667,774,441	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 7,577,570	95%	\$ 7,198,692	\$ 60,299,398
2047	Year 24	\$ 1,171,332,929	10%	\$ 774,259,253	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 8,785,907	95%	\$ 8,346,612	\$ 68,646,010
2048	Year 25	\$ 1,288,466,222	10%	\$ 891,392,546	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 10,115,077	95%	\$ 9,609,323	\$ 78,255,333
2049	Year 26	\$ 1,417,312,844	10%	\$ 1,020,239,168	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 11,577,164	95%	\$ 10,998,306	\$ 89,253,639
2050	Year 27	\$ 1,559,044,128	7%	\$ 1,161,970,452	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 13,185,460	95%	\$ 12,526,187	\$ 101,779,826
2051	Year 28	\$ 1,636,996,335	5%	\$ 1,239,922,659	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 14,070,022	95%	\$ 13,366,521	\$ 115,146,347
2052	Year 29	\$ 1,718,846,151	5%	\$ 1,321,772,475	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 14,998,813	95%	\$ 14,248,873	\$ 129,395,220
2053	Year 30	\$ 1,804,788,459	5%	\$ 1,407,714,783	7.5875	3.76	11.3475	\$ 15,974,043	95%	\$ 15,175,341	\$ 144,570,561
									TOTAL	\$ 144,570,561	\$ 1,139,770,755

NOTES: Assumes conservative increase in taxable value Year 1 - Year 10
 Uses consistent millage rates for life of the CRA
 Assumes statutory increment percentage of 95% for life of the CRA



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. ORDINANCE OF DISOLVEMENT

ORDINANCE NO. 3940

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT MYERS, FLORIDA, DISSOLVING THE EAST FORT MYERS REDEVELOPMENT AREA; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS: The City Council of the City of Fort Myers, Florida ("City Council"), adopted Resolution No. 87-46 on September 9, 1987, and enacted Ordinance No. 2420 on September 22, 1987, establishing a Community Redevelopment Agency pursuant to Part III, Chapter 163 Florida Statutes and designated itself to be the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City and to serve as the governing body thereof; and

WHEREAS: On March 26, 2007, City Council adopted a resolution finding that a blighted area, as defined in Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes, exists in that portion of the City of Fort Myers known as East Fort Myers, and that the redevelopment, conservation, rehabilitation, or combination thereof is in the public interest; and

WHEREAS: On May 21, 2007, City Council enacted Ordinance No. 3401 which established, among other things, the East Fort Myers Redevelopment Area and the East Fort Myers Trust Fund to receive on an annual basis the income, proceeds, revenues and funds derived from or held in connection with the East Fort Myers Redevelopment Area's undertaking and carrying out of community redevelopment; and

WHEREAS: On May 21, 2007, City Council adopted Resolution No. 2007-30 which adopted the East Fort Myers Revitalization and Redevelopment Plan dated May 21, 2007 as the plan for community redevelopment in East Fort Myers; and

WHEREAS: City Council has determined that it is no longer in the best interests of the residents, visitors, and businesses of the East Fort Myers Redevelopment Area to maintain said area.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT MYERS, FLORIDA, that:

SECTION 1. Recitals. The foregoing recitals are hereby fully incorporated herein by this reference and are deemed a material part of this Ordinance.

SECTION 2. Dissolution of the Area. The East Fort Myers Redevelopment Area is hereby dissolved.

SECTION 3. Termination of the Plan. All adopted community redevelopment plans for the East Fort Myers Redevelopment Area, including the East Fort Myers Revitalization and Redevelopment Plan approved by City Council by virtue of Resolution No. 2007-30 adopted on May 21, 2007, are hereby terminated and of no remaining effect.

SECTION 4. Termination of the Trust Fund. The East Fort Myers Trust Fund is hereby terminated and of no remaining effect.

SECTION 5. Severability. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, word, or portion of this Ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent provision and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portion hereto.

SECTION 6. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

ORDINANCE NO. 3940

PASSED IN PUBLIC SESSION of the City Council of the City of Fort Myers, Florida, on March 7, 2022.

Aye Teresa Watkins Brouse
Teresa Watkins Brouse

Aye John J. Streets, Jr.
John J. Streets, Jr.

Aye Terelyn P. Watson
Terelyn P. Watson

Aye Fred Burson
Fred Burson

Aye Darla Bonk
Darla Bonk
Councilpersons


APPROVED on March 7, 2022.

Kevin B. Anderson
Kevin B. Anderson
Mayor

Aye Lizette D. Bichette III
Lizette D. Bichette III
Mayor Pro Tem

FILED in the Office of the City Clerk March 7, 2022.

Owen Carlisle
Owen Carlisle, MMC
City Clerk



APPENDIX 2. EFM CRA LEGAL DESCRIPTION

The legal description of the study area can be found in the City Code of the City of Fort Myers, Florida, Chapter 26, Community Development and Improvements, Article II Community Redevelopment, Section 26-32 Name; purpose; areas. Subsection (c)(15) Area 15 East Fort Myers Redevelopment Area.

Area 15. East Fort Myers Redevelopment Area.

A parcel of land in Lee County, Florida. Beginning at the intersection of Marsh Ave. and Billy's Creek run southwesterly along Billy's Creek to the intersection of Billy's Creek and First St., continuing from the intersection of Billy's Creek and First St. toward the river and continue in northwesterly direction, then follow the river in the northeasterly direction to the intersection of the river and the city limit boundary, then following the city limit boundary in southerly direction until it intersects with Woodside Ave., then west on Woodside Ave. to the intersection of Woodside Ave. and Marsh Avenue, then south on Marsh Ave. to the intersection of Marsh Ave. and Billy's Creek and back to P.O.B.

Subject to easements, restrictions, reservations, and rights-of-way of record.



APPENDIX 3. NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACT STATEMENT

The EFMCRRA area contains primarily low and moderate-income housing. Florida statutes require community redevelopment plans to include a detail on the impact of redevelopment upon the residents of the redevelopment area and the surrounding areas in terms of relocation, traffic circulation, environmental quality, availability of community facilities and services and effect on school population.

A. Traffic Circulation

Road and traffic improvements will be designed to enhance safety and increase convenience for the movement of pedestrians and vehicles to, within, and through the Redevelopment Area. This will include proposed sidewalks for safety and aesthetic purposes, particularly as the sidewalks relate to the movements of school children from home to school and back and typical movement of people to and across Palm Beach Blvd.

The Plan does not include strategies for altering existing rights-of-ways other than increasing the number of pedestrian crossings of Palm Beach Blvd. The Plan does include provisions for roadway improvements that include sidewalk and street upgrades.

B. Environmental Quality

The CRA proposes to improve the environmental quality of the Redevelopment Area as redevelopment proceeds, particularly the natural features of Billy's Creek. Recommended improvements may include improvements to or the placement/replacement of pipes underground for improvements to the storm sewer facilities.

C. Community Facilities

CRA activities are anticipated to have a positive impact on the existing community facilities in the Redevelopment Area. There will be continuing improvement to all service systems (parks, roads, sidewalks, and drainage). No increase in open space is anticipated by the Plan; however, the CRA may consider additional open space in the future. The figure titled Existing Land Uses in the CRA shows existing open spaces.

D. Schools

The Plan does not include any programs to increase residential development beyond what is allowed by the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code. The existing schools are anticipated to accommodate any increase in students from development occurring independent of redevelopment activities.

E. Land Use and Zoning

The Plan anticipates only minor changes to future land use and zoning code designations to allow additional mixed use in the commercial corridors.

F. Relocation

The Fort Myers CRA is committed to assisting residents displaced by redevelopment projects to find suitable replacement housing within the local area.

APPENDIX 4. CONSISTENCY WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Florida Statutes require that the Community Redevelopment Plan conforms to the City of Fort Myers Comprehensive Plan. This Community Redevelopment Plan conforms to the goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan according to the Planning and Zoning Board at their meeting on _____. Any program recommended in this Community Redevelopment Plan that would require an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, such as a land use amendment, shall not be effectuated unless such amendment to the Comprehensive Plan occurs.

Revitalizing declining areas within the City is very important as seen by the following Comprehensive Plan objective and policies:

OBJECTIVE 3

Revitalize declining areas through rehabilitation, redevelopment, and infill strategies as appropriate.

Policy 3.1) Except for areas located within the Downtown Redevelopment Area, some major City corridors are designated for an improvement strategy, in need of multiple actions to correct serious problems of poor site planning, congestion, intensive activity, and/or an incomplete transportation network.

Action 3.1.1) Corridor studies or redevelopment plans will be prepared and adopted to implement this policy as well as transportation policies.

Policy 3.2) Special planning and implementation efforts shall be continuously conducted for targeted neighborhoods.

Action 3.2.1) Detailed neighborhood plans or community redevelopment plans shall be prepared and adopted for various neighborhoods throughout the City.

Action 3.2.2) Upon completion of the specific redevelopment plans, special Neighborhood Redevelopment Districts shall be designated on the Fort Myers Redevelopment Areas Map, as amended from time to time on file in the City Clerk's office, and implemented through the Land Development Regulations. It is the express intent to promote the redevelopment of areas through special controls, economic incentives, and public as well as private investment.

Action 3.2.3) The following redevelopment, neighborhood, or special plans shall be implemented to the greatest extent feasible:

- 2010 Downtown Plan; Fort Myers Master Plan
- Edison Park Neighborhood Plan;
- Central Fort Myers Area Study;
- Cleveland Avenue Redevelopment Plan;
- Velasco Village Redevelopment Plan;
- Winkler Safe Neighborhood Improvement District Plan;

- Westwood Redevelopment Plan;
- East Fort Myers Revitalization and Redevelopment Plan;
- Urban Infill & Redevelopment Areas, as shown on Map E-1; and,
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard & Veronica S. Shoemaker Boulevards Revitalization Plan.

Under policy 3.2 it is made clear that the implementation of various plans such as the East Fort Myers Revitalization and Redevelopment plan should be implemented to the fullest extent possible.

APPENDIX 5. AFFORDABLE HOUSING STATEMENT

The Community Redevelopment Plan anticipates expenditures for rehabilitation of affordable housing units. However, should funding become available for the construction or financing of the construction of housing units, the Community Redevelopment Agency will endeavor to ensure the units will be affordable according to the latest U.S. Housing and Urban Development Income Limits guidelines for Lee County.

APPENDIX 6. PUBLIC MEETINGS

Meeting Date	Summary
August 3, 2022 August 4, 2022	Introduction and Purpose of CRA Reestablishment
January 26, 2023 (2 sessions)	Assessing Input from Residents and Stakeholders via Survey
April 4, 2023	Review of 6-Point Strategy to Guide Redevelopment

List of Questions for participants in the public open house forum:

1. What do you like most about your community?
2. What do you like least about your community?
3. What do you believe is the most important issue facing the community?
4. What do you believe is your community's greatest strength?
5. Is architecture/design an important aspect of your community?
6. Is being able to walk safely for shopping important to you?
7. Is public safety an important issue in your neighborhood?
8. Are there any other issues you would like us to know about?

Responses to questions from participants in the public open house forum:

The participants were separated into five (5) tables and given an aerial of the proposed CRA. Using the questions as a guide, each table came up with a series of important issues and opportunities. While some groups concentrated on issues or things lacking in the area, others provided their thoughts on enhancements to what already exists. Many of the comments that follow are items that should be addressed in the long term by the City (or FDOT), such as storm sewer, Palm Beach Boulevard improvements and code enforcement. Over time, as the CRA tax increment grows, these types of larger projects can be augmented with CRA dollars. Most, if not all the other items can be addressed through the programs recommended in this Plan.

The following is a summary of the tables' comments:

Table 1

- Dilapidated shopping centers need updating
- Palm Beach Boulevard needs improvements, i.e., crosswalks, landscaping
- More code enforcement

Table 2

- Rebuild Tarpon Street pier – no boat ramp
- Cleanup shopping centers and Palm Beach Blvd
- Encourage grocery stores
- Control food trucks – create central gathering point
- More code enforcement

Table 3

- Palm Beach Boulevard needs crosswalks and other means to slow traffic
- Infrastructure improvements, particularly storm water drainage and sidewalks
- Closing of boat ramp at Oasis not a good idea
- Parks, such as Tarpon Street and adjacent park land, should improve water access, particularly for Billy's Creek
- Preserve historic character

Table 4

- Infrastructure needs upgrading, storm sewer and sidewalks in particular
- Need more code enforcement
- Need medical center facilities
- There is raw sewage often
- Need storm sewers
- East entry should be enhanced
- Rebuild pier and improve maintenance
- Attract new business
- Consider Terry Park baseball museum

Table 5

- Trash is everywhere
- Traffic on Palm Beach Boulevard is too fast, need to slow traffic
- Infrastructure needs upgrading (sewer, storm drainage)
- Keep area walkable
- Restore Tarpon Pier, Park and Community Center Pier
- Return shopping centers into viable entities
- Provide a library

APPENDIX 7. CRA OPERATIONS

CRA OPERATION

Interlocal Agreement/Memorandums of Understanding

It is likely and desirable for the City to provide services to the CRA or to undertake certain activities on behalf of the CRA, therefore, the CRA and City should enter into an inter-local agreement. This agreement should outline the responsibilities of each party, the method by which the CRA would request services, and the rate of reimbursement the CRA will pay to the City. Statutory interpretation by agencies of the State have determined that the City can only be reimbursed for its cost to provide services and no profit or other fee over and above cost can be charged to the CRA. Therefore, the Inter-local Agreement should provide the rates of reimbursement for persons or positions which may be utilized to undertake CRA activities as well as a statement that materials or related expenses paid for by the City will be reimbursed at cost.

In order to provide sufficient documentation to justify the reimbursement of costs to the City, the CRA and City should establish a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for each significant activity the City will undertake on behalf of the CRA. Each MOU should, at minimum, outline the activity(ies) to be undertaken and the anticipated timeframe for which the activities will be undertaken. Where possible, the CRA should consider including MOU positions that will be utilized and an estimated or not-to-exceed cost.

Minor services, such as tasks that will require minimal cost reimbursement or minimal time by City staff on an irregular basis, need not be covered by a MOU, but should be reimbursed based on reimbursement terms of the Inter-local Agreement. Requests from the CRA to the City should be memorialized in a memo or email to insure documentation of the request.

Annual Budget

Provisions for budgeting of dependent special districts outlined in §189.418, FS provide the requirements for annual budgeting of the special district and the information that must be contained in the annual budget. The CRA should ensure that each year it approves a budget by a resolution of the CRA Board that meets all requirements outlined in the statute.

Additionally, §189.418(5), FS requires that the proposed budget of a dependent special district must be contained within the general budget of the local governing authority to which it is dependent and be clearly stated as the budget of the dependent district. However, with the concurrence of the local governing authority, a dependent district may be budgeted separately. The dependent district must provide any budget information requested by the local governing authority at the time and place designated by the local governing authority.

Careful consideration should be given to this approach. Separation of budgets provides a clearer understanding that the CRA is a separate entity from the City and will ensure that future officials and residents understand that the CRA is the sole approver of its own budget allocations. More importantly, as the CRA's major source of income, increment revenue, is based on the final millage rates adopted by the taxing authorities that contribute increment to the CRA, separating the CRA's budget from the City's will allow the CRA to adopt a budget with final revenue numbers rather than estimates of revenue. This will eliminate uncertainty and will eliminate the need for a future budget amendment to adjust revenue levels.

Purchasing of Products and Services

The CRA will need to contract for products or services from time to time in order to fulfill its mission. When contracting out or purchasing products, the CRA shall meet all requirements of its by-laws (as amended from time to time) and of all statutory provisions related to purchasing.

Audits and Annual Reporting of CRA Activities

The CRA needs to ensure that it files all required reports each year and provides for its statutorily required annual audit. The reports required as of the authoring of this Community Redevelopment Plan include:

Special District Report

The CRA is a dependent special district under Chapter 189 of the Florida Statutes. As such, the CRA is required to annually report to Florida Commerce. This report consists of the payment of an annual Special District Fee and the updating of pertinent information related to the CRA such as the CRA's Registered Agent, its business address, and the district's boundaries.

Annual Report to the Governing Body

The CRA is required under §163.356(3)(c), FS to submit to the Governing Body (City Council) by March 31st of each year a report of its activities for the previous year. This report shall include a description of the CRA's activities during the preceding fiscal year and shall include a complete financial statement setting forth its assets, liabilities, income, and operating expenses as of the end of such fiscal year. The CRA must also publish in a newspaper of general circulation in Highlands County a statement that the report has been submitted and is available for inspection by the general public at the Fort Myers City Clerk's Office and the Office of the CRA. The CRA should also strive to make this report available for viewing at the local library and to have it posted on both the City and CRA's websites.

Annual CRA Audit

§163.387(8), FS requires the CRA to provide for an annual audit of the Redevelopment Trust Fund and an audit report to be conducted and prepared by an independent certified public accountant or firm.

The audit report must describe the amount and source of deposits into, and the amount and purpose of withdrawals from, the trust fund during the fiscal year. The report must also include the amount of principal and interest paid during the year on any indebtedness to which increment revenues are pledged and the remaining amount of such indebtedness. The CRA is further required to provide a copy of the report to each taxing authority levying taxes within the CRA (whether the taxing authority contributes increment to the CRA or not) by registered (certified) mail.

The CRA may choose to have its own auditors perform this audit or it may contract with the same auditors the City is utilizing provided that the final audit report for the CRA is provided as a separate section or document that can be distributed independently of the City's audit.

Annual Financial Report

The CRA, as a special district, is also required, under §218.32, FS, to provide for a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report to be submitted to the Florida Department of Financial Services (DFS). This report must follow a format prescribed by the DFS and must be completed in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

CRA's are generally accounted for as blended component units of the governing body that created them and as such, the CRA report would be contained within the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. There are several CRAs which submit their own CAFR, but this number is limited. If part of the City's report, the CRA must ensure that all relevant information is submitted to the City in a timely manner and that the City submits its report to the DFS in a timely manner.