



#RedevelopmentWorks



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency

October 1, 2020 - September 30, 2021

The photo collage on page 3 features completed murals at McCollum Hall and the Barden Street Community Garden Learning Center, projects that were supported by the CRA.

- Upper row left (McCollum Hall mural): Poet Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906), namesake of many local community landmarks.
- Upper row center (McCollum Hall mural): Swing dancing was popular in McCollum Hall's second floor dance hall during the venue's heyday in the 1940s.
- Upper row right (McCollum Hall mural): The Package Store, one of the neighborhood shops located in McCollum Hall.
- Center row left (Barden Street Community Garden Learning Center mural): Politician and Civil Rights Activist John Lewis (1940 - 2020).
- Center row center (Barden Street Community Garden Learning Center mural): American Novelist and 1993 Nobel Laureate in Literature Toni Morrison (1931 - 2019), and American Poet, Memoirist, and Civil Rights Activist Maya Angelou (1928 - 2014).
- Center row right (Barden Street Community Garden Learning Center mural): Founders of Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU): Missionary, Attorney, and FAMU First President Thomas DeSaille Tucker (1844 - 1903), and Florida Legislator, FAMU Assistant Principal, and Vice President Thomas Van Renssaler Gibbs (1855 - 1898).
- Bottom row left (McCollum Hall mural): Fort Myers Businesswoman, Podiatrist, and Philanthropist Dr. Ella Mae Piper (1884 - 1954).
- Bottom row center (McCollum Hall mural): During World War II, McCollum Hall became a United Service Organization (U.S.O.) serving the black servicemen training to fly and repair warplanes at nearby Page and Buckingham Fields.
- Bottom row right (McCollum Hall mural): During its heyday (1930s - 1960s) as a Chitlin' Circuit venue where famous black entertainers performed, McCollum Hall's white patrons defied segregation laws to attend the shows, briefly integrating Fort Myers when the rope separating the races mysteriously disappeared as the dancing began.







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1984

The Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Fort Myers (CRA) was first created as the Downtown Redevelopment Agency at the request of the late Councilperson Veronica S. Shoemaker. The goal was to revitalize downtown's commercial district, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on January 26, 1990. The area is now branded as the downtown River District.

Vito Palmizano

From the CRA Board Chair



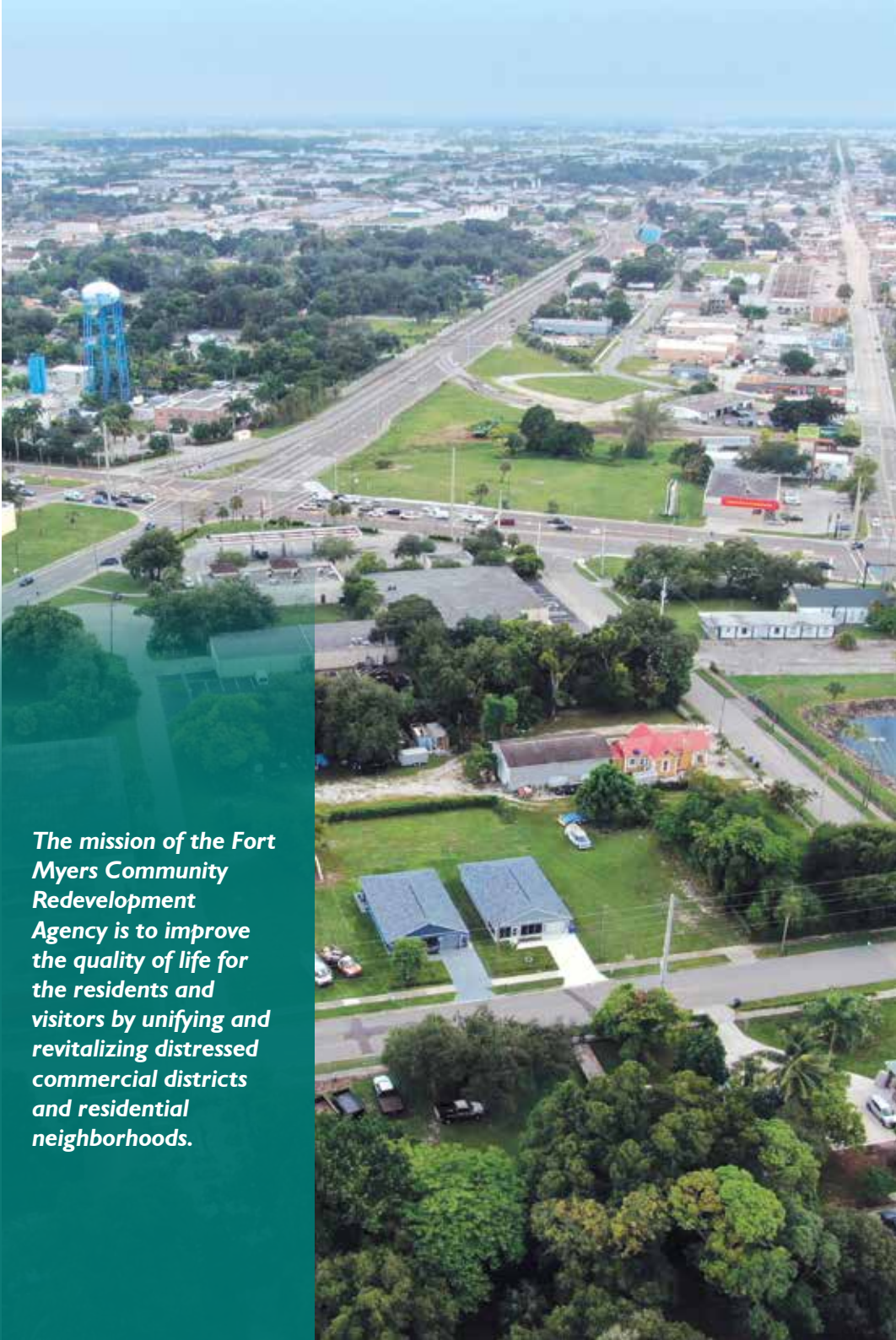
The Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) plays a transformative role in redeveloping blighted areas in our city into communities with sustainable economic, social, and cultural activity. Each redevelopment area is served by a carefully-considered plan created to meet its specific needs. We are dedicated to revitalizing these areas into inviting neighborhoods and thriving commercial centers valued by both businesses and residents.

Central to implement these plans is tax increment financing, a tool available only to CRAs, to attract private investment into our redevelopment areas. Tax increment funding leverages private investment and creates powerful partnerships that deliver results above and beyond the capabilities of local governments working alone.

This annual report highlights Fort Myers CRA's purpose, function, and performance over the previous fiscal year, results made possible through collaborations with our community, city, and county partners.

The report focuses on our neighborhoods and businesses, the lifeblood of our community. The CRA is dedicated to improving our neighborhoods so that increasing property values benefit the homeowner, the surrounding community, and the City as a whole.

Public safety is one of the keystones of redevelopment. Our neighborhoods and commercial areas are made safer and more stable by reducing blight. Reinvesting funds from each individual area into projects and grants multiply the efforts of the City or County, energizing communities, and beautifying neighborhoods for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike.



The mission of the Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency is to improve the quality of life for the residents and visitors by unifying and revitalizing distressed commercial districts and residential neighborhoods.

The current housing market has brought to the forefront another CRA function, stimulating the creation of more affordable housing for our workforce. Several affordable and attainable residential communities are underway in our redevelopment areas, projects spurred by the foresight and support of the CRA.

Inseparable from affordable residential communities are good-paying jobs with local employers. Encouraging entrepreneurial endeavors and small businesses creates vital local jobs while keeping money local. This is crucial to our community, and the CRA currently offers grant funding to businesses paying a living wage to employees in career fields and provides marketing support to new businesses in our redevelopment areas.

On behalf of the Fort Myers CRA, I would like to express appreciation to the City of Fort Myers and its staff, the Lee County Board of County Commissioners and its staff, and our elected state and federal officials and their staffs, for their assistance and continued support in our endeavors to uplift our community. This concerted effort focuses on redevelopment and community enhancement, because that is the mission of the Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency: to improve the quality of life for our residents and visitors by unifying and revitalizing distressed commercial districts and residential neighborhoods and thereby building a stronger, more vital city.

Sincerely,

Kevin Anderson

Kevin Anderson
Chair, Board of Commissioners
Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency

From the CRA Executive Director



The Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is pleased to present its fiscal year 2021 Annual Report. The content that unfolds in the following pages proudly demonstrates the CRA's commitment to the continuing growth of our redevelopment communities.

At the core our work and achievements are our Board of Commissioners, our citizen-based Advisory Board, and our dedicated staff - all committed to and guided by our motto, "Advancing Businesses. Transforming Communities. Redeveloping Fort Myers for the Future."

As you turn the pages, you will find our fiscal year 2021 financials presented in an easily comprehensible format, charts and graphics reporting operating

funds, a summary of our achievements according to our redevelopment plans, and a table summarizing fundamental data and highlights of a productive year.

The report also features a special showcase for public art murals completed in 2021. These images vibrantly celebrate the history, personalities, and the values that define our neighborhoods. Created by community partners like the Fort Myers Mural Society and project developers, these artistic statements have become popular attractions in their own right at McCollum Hall, the Barden Street Community Garden Learning Center, and West End at City Walk.

Another spotlight this year is focused on West End at City Walk, a Downtown redevelopment area apartment project that rose from a long-vacant city block, the former site of a deteriorated strip mall that had been razed to the ground. In its place, the project brought forth an attractive, sustainable, walkable community.

I believe great things are in store for our community in 2022 and beyond. The Fort Myers CRA is ever-changing with new businesses and residents moving in every day. I am proud to say that each of our redevelopment areas is growing in its own distinctive way. This growth allows us to use the resulting generated increment revenue to fund public improvements and programs that continue to uplift our redevelopment areas and our entire city.

Sincerely,

Michele Hylton-Terry

Michele Hylton-Terry
Executive Director

Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency



Harnessing the Immense Power of Community.

#RedevelopmentWorks

Redevelopment is one of the most positive tools available to our Fort Myers community. When a group of people with similar interests work together toward the same goal — the betterment of their neighborhoods, their businesses, their economy, and their homes — they release an immense transformative power that changes lives today and inspires generations for decades to come.



Phyllis R.L. Calloway, J.D.
Assistant Director
Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency

Barden Street Community Garden Learning Center Murals.

CRA Leadership



Fred Burson[^]
CRA Board of Commissioners



Kevin Anderson^{^^*}
CRA Board of Commissioners



Teresa Watkins Brown^{**}
CRA Board of Commissioners



Johnny W. Streets, Jr.
CRA Board of Commissioners



Terolyn Watson
CRA Board of Commissioners



Darla Bonk
CRA Board of Commissioners



Dr. Liston D. Bochette III
CRA Board of Commissioners



Michele Hylton-Terry
CRA Executive Director



CRA Advisory Board

- Jarrett Eady..... Advisory Board Chair
- Bruce Grady Advisory Board Vice Chair
- Kirk Beck Advisory Board Member
- Michael Doyle Advisory Board Member
- Glenn Hasenfus Advisory Board Member
- Rachel Jones Advisory Board Member
- Geraldine Ware Advisory Board Member

CRA Staff

- Phyllis R. Calloway, J.D. Assistant Director
- Phenicia McMillion Community Redevelopment Specialist
- Renee Turbeville Community Redevelopment Specialist
- Natalie S. Dunham Advertising & Promotions Manager
- Chet Vishudanand Trades Worker II
- Gabriel Martinez Service Worker I
- Victor Cruz Service Worker I

CRA Operating Funds

Last Audit September 2021

Balance Sheet

Total Assets	\$6,956,810.86
Total Liabilities	\$(657,079.46)
Total Fund Balance	\$(6,299,731.40)
Total Liabilities & Fund Balance	\$(6,956,810.86)

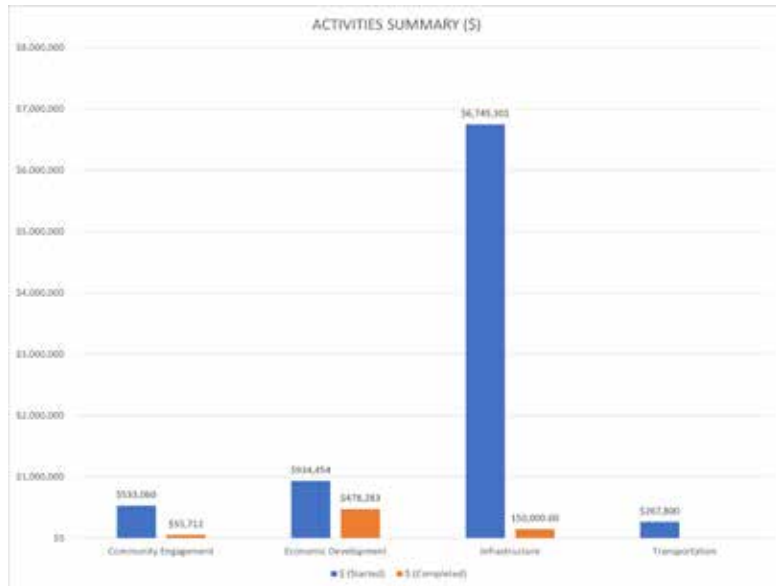
Comparable Statement of Revenues, Expenditures & Changes in Fund Balance

Total Revenues	\$6,412,173.00
Total Expenditures	\$5,826,530.00
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	\$2,090,174.00
Fund Balance - September 30, 2021	\$2,675,817.00

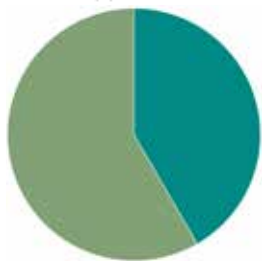
The following is a summary of this community redevelopment agency's achievement of its redevelopment plan's goals.

Activity	Plan	Page #
Community Engagement	Downtown 2010	4-24, 5-10, 5-40
	Cleveland Ave. 2014	48
	Dr. MLK, Jr. 2018	4.4, 5.4, 6.2-6.14
Economic Development	Downtown 2010	30
	Cleveland Ave. 2014	58
	Dr. MLK, Jr. 2018	3.1, 3.4, 4.3, 4.5, 6.11-6.13
Infrastructure	Downtown 2010	101
Transportation	Downtown 2010	101

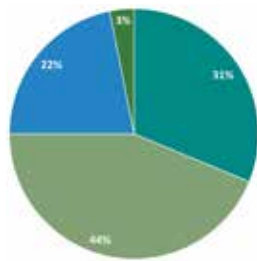
Financials



COMPLETED (C) ACTIVITIES BY COUNT



STARTED (S) ACTIVITIES BY COUNT



■ Community Engagement
 ■ Economic Development
 ■ Community Engagement
 ■ Economic Development
■ Infrastructure
 ■ Transportation

Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency	
Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Special District Accountability Program ID 379	
Registered Agent	Mrs. Michele Hylton-Terry
Office/Mailing Address	1400 Jackson St., Suite 102, Fort Myers, FL 33901
Telephone	(239) 321-7100
Email	mhylton@cityftmyers.com
Fax	n/a
Website	www.fortmyerscra.com
County(ies)	Lee
Date Created/Established	Monday, September 17, 1984
Creation Documents	City Ordinances 2249, 2420, 2842, 2843, 2844 and 2845
Board Selection	Identical to Local Governing Authority
Authority to Issue Bonds	Yes
Revenue	Tax Increment Financing
Most Recent Update	Wednesday, March 31, 2021
Total number of Activities Types Started	4
Total number of Activities Types Completed	4
Current Year Taxable Value in CRA	\$1,459,977,526.00
Actual expended increment revenue	\$6,553,813.65
Base Year Taxable Value in CRA	\$863,398,631.00
Current Year Tax Increment Value	\$596,578,895.00
Total amt. expended for low & middle income affordable housing	\$0.00

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Featured Project

Exciting changes are happening in Fort Myers! West End at City Walk, an apartment complex, replaced the razed site of a former strip mall with an attractive walkable residential community. Innovative design and cooperative development are recreating our neighborhoods as ideal places to live.

Completed: West End at City Walk.





West End at City Walk celebrates local history and culture through two public art murals leading into its parking garage. The residential community is located within walking distance of the world-wrenowned Edison & Ford Winter Estates.

West End at City Walk

The West End at City Walk complex features 318 Class A residential units, 527 parking spaces, a 17,000 sq. ft. Amenity Center, and 5,500 square feet of office space. The site's deteriorated strip mall remained empty for many years before being razed in the mid-2000s. West End at City Walk offers studio to two-bedroom floor plans, and community amenities for residents - with the most exciting feature being its convenient walkability to the vibrant downtown historic center. This residential project was selected to receive \$5.5 million CRA tax increment rebate at 95% over a 10-year period. Residents started moving in the Summer of 2021.

About

CRA [SEE-R-A], noun: A dependent special district in which any future increases in property values are set aside to support economic development projects within that district.

Q: What is a Community Redevelopment Agency?

A: The activities and programs offered within a Community Redevelopment Area are administered by the Community Redevelopment Agency. A five- to seven-member CRA “Board” created by the local government (city or county) directs the agency. The Board can be comprised of local government officials and or other individuals appointed by the local government. Although one local government may establish multiple CRA districts, there generally may be only one CRA Board. Each district must maintain separate trust funds, and expend those funds only in that district.

Q: What is a Community Redevelopment Area or District?

A: Under Florida law (Chapter 163, Part III), local governments are able to designate areas as Community Redevelopment Areas when certain conditions exist. Since all the monies used in financing CRA activities are locally generated, CRAs are not overseen by the state, but redevelopment plans must be consistent with local government comprehensive plans. Examples of conditions that can support the creation of a Community Redevelopment Area include, but are not limited to: the presence of substandard or inadequate structures, a shortage of affordable housing, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient roadways, and inadequate parking. To document that the required conditions exist, the local government must survey the proposed redevelopment area and prepare a Finding of Necessity. If the Finding of Necessity determines that the required conditions exist, the local government may create a Community Redevelopment Area to provide the tools needed to foster and support redevelopment of the targeted area.

There are currently over 220 Community Redevelopment Areas in the State of Florida. To obtain a current list, visit the Florida DEO website (<http://www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/special-districts/special-district-accountability-program/official-list-of-special-districts>).

Q: How does the CRA Process Work?

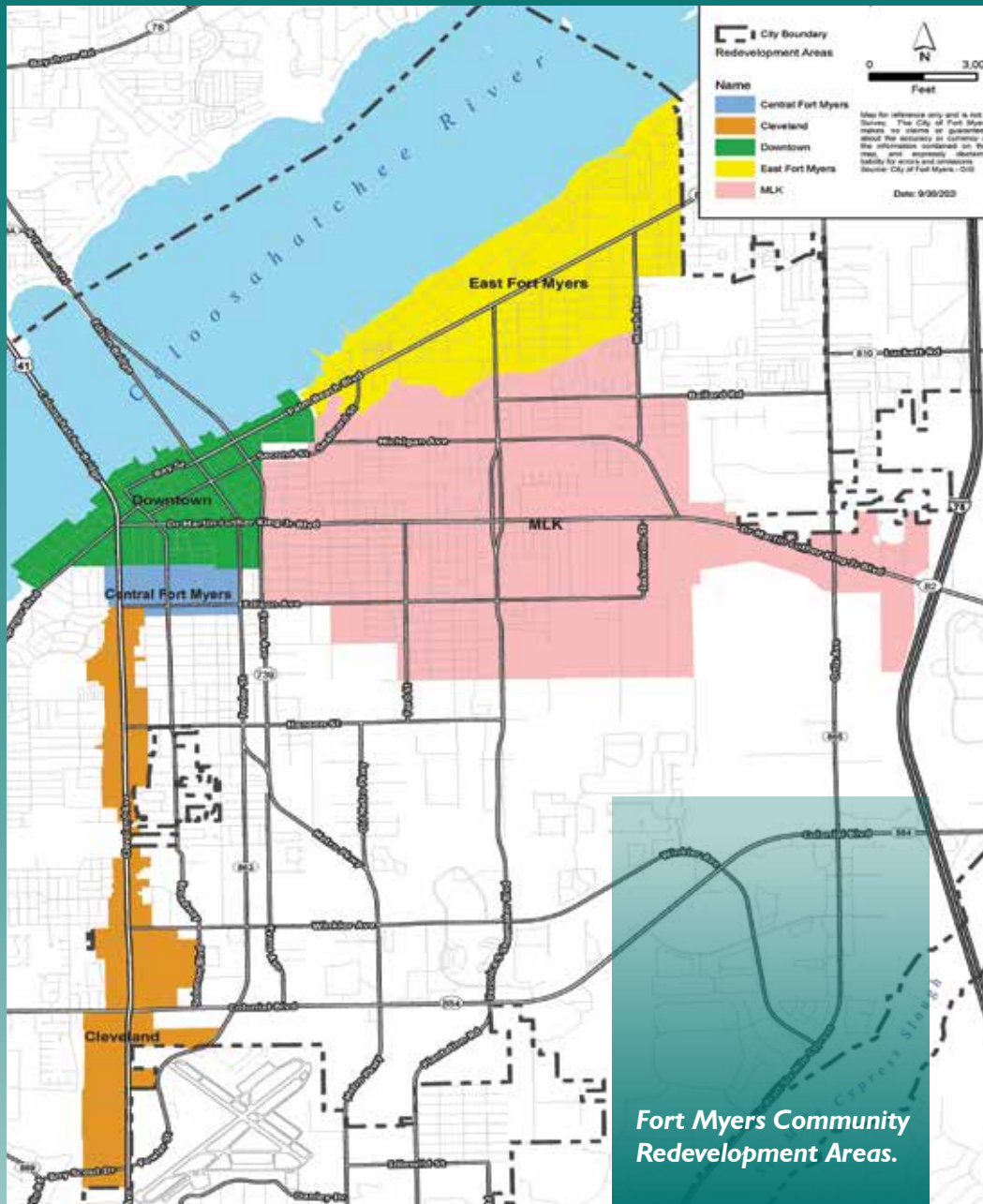
A: A public meeting begins the designation process. Several steps will have to be accomplished before the Community Redevelopment Area becomes a reality. These steps are briefly outlined below.

- I. Adopt the Finding of Necessity. This will formally identify the blight conditions within the targeted area and establish the area boundary.
- II. Develop and adopt the Community Redevelopment Plan. The plan addresses the unique needs of the targeted area and includes the overall goals for redevelopment in the area, as well as identifying specific projects.
- III. Create a Redevelopment Trust Fund. Establishment of the Trust Fund enables the Community Redevelopment Agency to direct the increase in real property tax revenues back into the targeted area.

The Florida Legislature addressed CRAs in 2002 from an intergovernmental point of view, to strengthen the ability of cities and counties to manage CRA creation, notices and term issues. Disputes between cities and counties involving CRAs can be resolved locally by interlocal agreements, and should be, since they usually involve growth management issues other than just funding.

Q: What is a Community Redevelopment Plan?

A: The Community Redevelopment Agency is responsible for developing and implementing the Community Redevelopment Plan that addresses the unique needs of the targeted area. The plan includes the overall goals for redevelopment in the area, as well as identifying the types of projects planned for the area.



Examples of traditional projects include: streetscapes and roadway improvements, building renovations, new building construction, flood control initiatives, water and sewer improvements, parking lots and garages, neighborhood parks, sidewalks and street tree plantings. The plan can also include redevelopment incentives such as grants and loans for such things as façade improvements, sprinkler system upgrades, signs, and structural improvements. The redevelopment plan is a living document that can be updated to meet the changing needs within the Community Redevelopment Area; however, the boundaries of the area cannot be changed without starting the process from the beginning.

Q: What is Tax Increment Financing?

A: Tax increment financing is a unique tool available to cities and counties for redevelopment activities. It is used to leverage public funds to promote private sector activity in the targeted area. The dollar value of all real property in the Community Redevelopment Area is determined as of a fixed date, also known as the “frozen value.” Taxing authorities, which contribute to the tax increment, continue to receive property tax revenues based on the frozen value. These frozen value revenues are available for general government purposes. However, any tax revenues from increases in real property value, referred to as “increment,” are deposited into the Community Redevelopment Agency Trust Fund and dedicated to the redevelopment area.

It is important to note that property tax revenue collected by the School Board and any special district are not affected under the tax increment financing process. Further, unlike in some states, Florida taxing entities write a check to the CRA trust fund, after monies are received from the tax collector. In California, the increment is sent to the CRAs directly out of collected county tax revenues, before they are distributed to each taxing entity.

The tax increment revenues can be used immediately, saved for a particular project, or can be bonded to maximize the funds available. Any funds received from a tax increment financing area must be used for specific redevelopment purposes within the targeted area, and not for general government purposes.



Above (Barden Street Community Garden Learning Center mural): Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, Attorney and Civil Rights Activist Thurgood Marshall (1908 - 1993), NASA Astronaut/First Black Woman in Space, Engineer, and Physician Mae C. Jemison (b. 1956), and 65th United States Secretary of State, Politician, Statesman, Diplomat, and Army Officer Colin Powell (1937 - 2021).

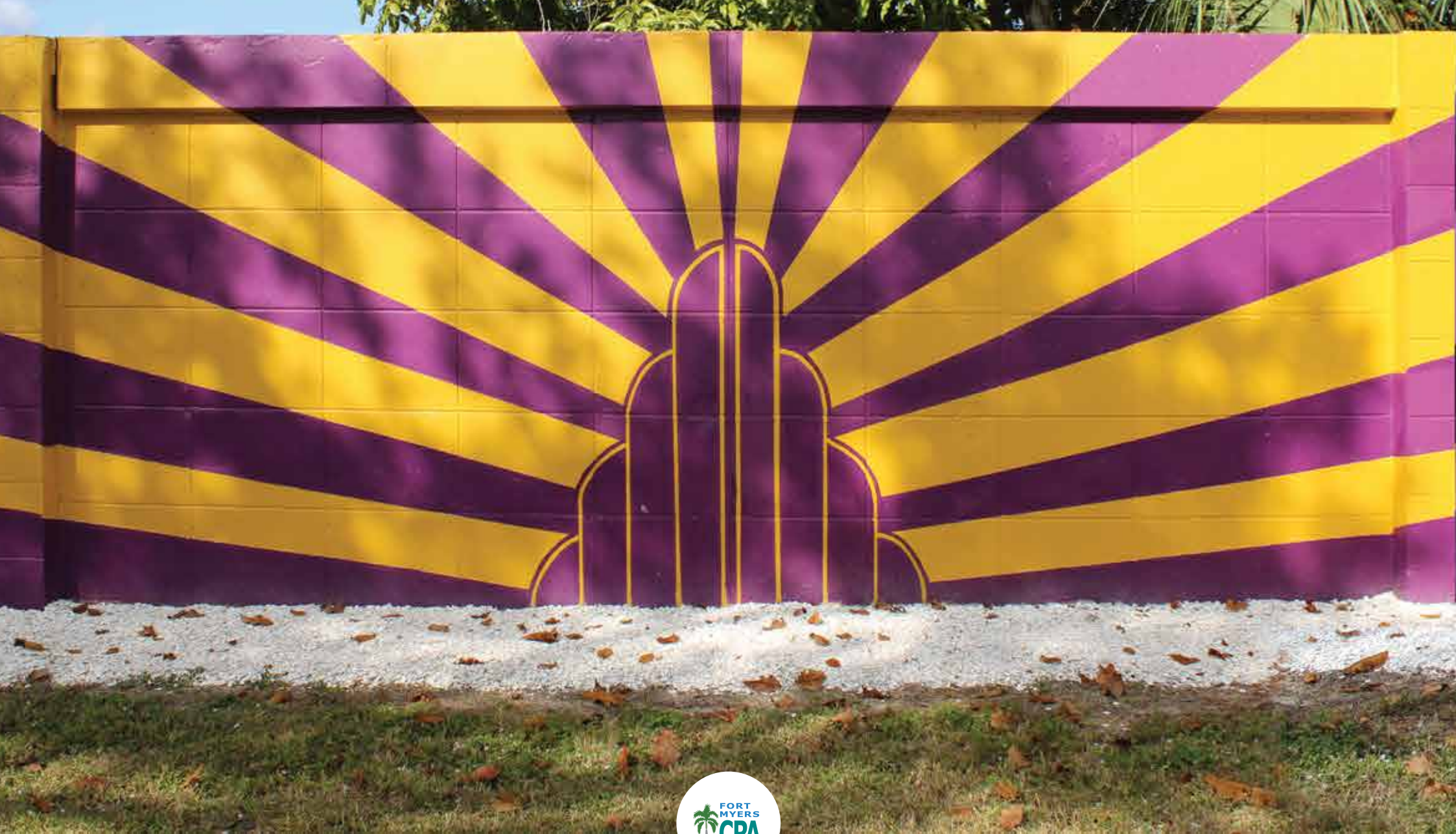
References

Photo Credits for this Report: Joseph R. Bonora/Catalyst Asset Management, Inc./Catalyst Community Capital, Inc., Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), Jerry Miller, Ken Rochon/www.TheUmbrellaSyndicate.com, Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center/Florida Arts/Vito Palmisano Photography.

Resources

Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency/www.fortmyerscra.com
Florida Redevelopment Association/www.redevelopment.net.

This 2021 Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Annual Report was published on March 31, 2022.
Edits or revisions may occur without notice.



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