



ENHANCING SPACES CONNECTING PLACES BUILDING COMMUNITY

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

LAKELAND CRA
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

REDEVELOPMENT WORK IS VERY MUCH AKIN TO ASSEMBLING A PUZZLE.



Portions of the redevelopment area come together seamlessly while others tend to be missing components that take years to coalesce. In 2019, the Lakeland CRA focused heavily on filling those gaps, and Staff had a blast executing the work while building community bonds. It began with art & entertainment enhancements through murals and tapestries. The focus then shifted

into investment in Dixieland CRA music venue Union Hall, a Swan Brewery expansion in the Downtown CRA, and finally Yard on Mass, the first food truck park in Polk County. In addition, Lakeland will soon welcome its first food hall, The Joinery, on Lake Mirror.

On the housing front, Lincoln Square was completed filling a four-acre void at the crossroads of two historically & culturally rich communities. The partnership involved with the Midtown Lofts, multi-family affordable housing, led to the start of construction in Parker Street neighborhood which is now one of the most desirable areas in the city for affordable new home starts.

Unveiling the Catalyst Development Plan for the Downtown CRA generated widespread buzz in the Florida Real Estate Marketplace and provided a realistic glimpse into how the City could attract roughly half a billion dollars in private investment and expand the City's future tax base. Since the reveal, there is new construction on three sites along the banks of Lake Mirror, and the skyline of the Massachusetts Avenue Corridor is awaiting new opportunities. In light of these successes, there is still much to do!

We want Lakelanders to recognize that we are working diligently to provide a high quality of life and world class amenities that keep them here for good. For those considering Lakeland, we want you to know there is a place for you. Read on—find your fit—you may be the missing piece.



Alis Drumgo
CRA Manager



BEN MUNDY

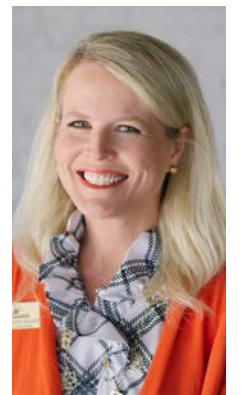
As a member and current chair of the Lakeland CRA Advisory Board, I have witnessed multiple success stories in recent years, from the CRA providing financial backing to renovate aging buildings and redevelop sites in blighted areas, to the CRA supporting new development within targeted areas. CRA staff continues to develop innovative programs for the Dixieland, Midtown and Downtown communities that help bridge obstacles and encourage economic development. Neighborhoods have been improved, the Mirrorton project will bring new life to an underutilized portion of the downtown area, and Midtown Lofts will address workforce housing shortages. On the horizon is the much anticipated 'road diet' project for South Florida Avenue through Dixieland, which may not only be a game changer for Lakeland, but could serve as a model for other cities. Much has been accomplished and although challenges remain, there is no doubt that the CRA is positioned to be a catalyst for continuing redevelopment in Lakeland.



STEPHANIE MADDEN

As a Lakeland City Commissioner, it has been an honor to be a part of our Community Redevelopment Agency's Advisory Board. Our Lakeland CRA has a penchant for disrupting blight and stimulating a growing, vibrant ecosystem, where innovative ideas flourish. Yes, we invest in infrastructure, restoring abandoned buildings, revitalizing deteriorating neighborhoods, and re-surfacing facades and pathways, but more importantly, we invest in people. People in our city have dreams; dreams that match our city's vision statement: to create a vibrant, innovative, culturally inclusive, world-class community. Because of our CRA, we are able to partner with those dreamers. We capture ideas and collaborate with investors, artisans and entrepreneurs, and our entire community is the beneficiary.

Third spaces have emerged for dancing, celebrating, tasting and toasting life's special events, and new neighborhoods continue to grow in a safe and beautiful surrounding, thanks to our Lakeland CRA!



HELPING BUSINESSES REBUILDING NEIGHBORHOODS



OUR TEAM

LAKELAND COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY STAFF

Alis Drumgo
CRA Manager

Terrilyn Bostwick
Senior Project Manager

D'Ariel Reed
Project Manager

Damaris Stull
Project Manager

Iyanna Jones
Project Associate

Jasmine Denson
Office Associate II

LAKELAND MAYOR & CITY COMMISSION

William "Bill" Mutz
Mayor

Scott Franklin
Commissioner

Stephanie Madden
Commissioner

Sara Roberts McCarley
Commissioner

Bill Read
Commissioner

Chad McLeod
Commissioner

Phillip Walker
Commissioner

CITY OF LAKELAND STAFF

Tony Delgado
City Manager

Shawn Sherrouse
Deputy City Manager

Emily Colon
Assistant City Manager

Nicole Travis
Director of Community & Economic Development

OUR BOARD

LAKELAND COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Ben F. Mundy, Jr.
Dixieland

Eddie Lake
At Large

Stephanie Madden
City Commission Appointee

Harry Bryant
Midtown

Brandon Eady
Downtown

Frank Lansford
Midtown

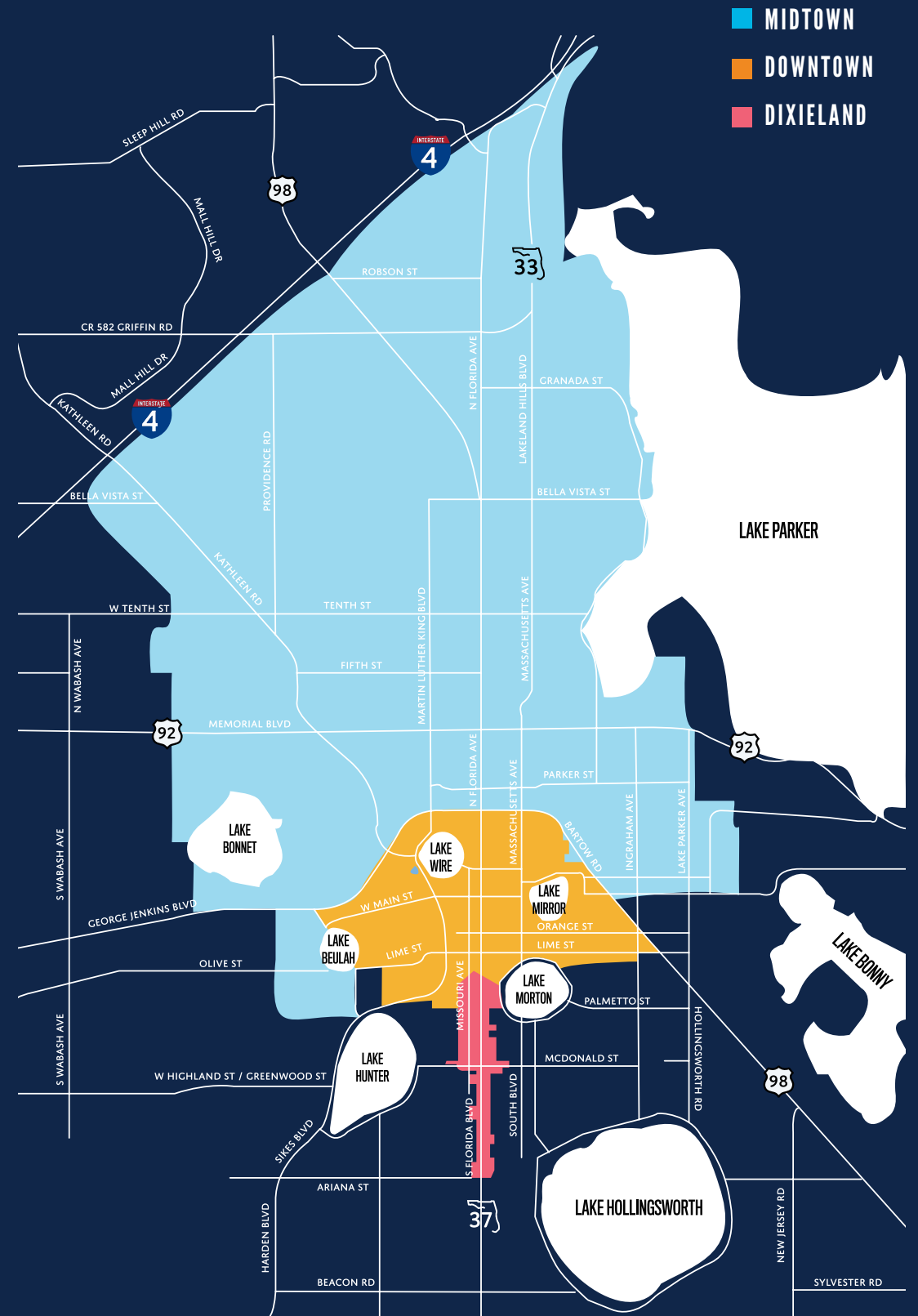
Dean Boring
Midtown

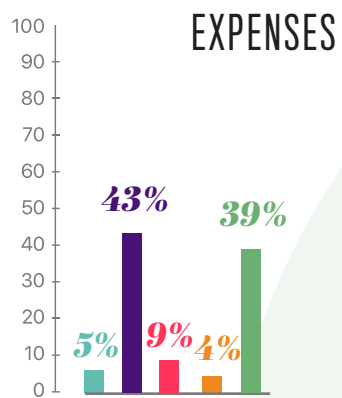
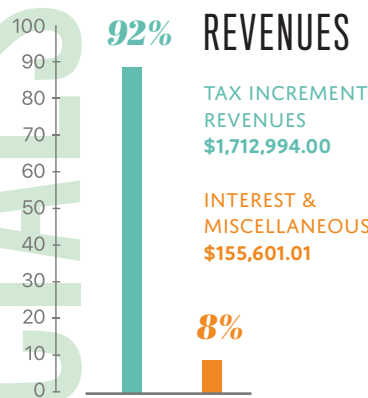
Cory Petcoff
Dixieland

Brian Goding
Dixieland

Cliff J. Wiley
Downtown

Zelda Abram
Downtown



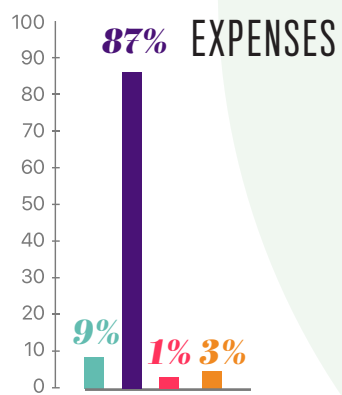
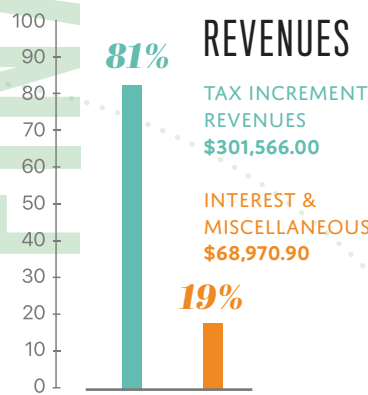


DOWNTOWN

OPERATING \$54,947.00
 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES \$440,912.08
 CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS \$97,564.82
 NEIGHBORHOODS \$42,987.00
 DEBT SERVICE \$400,000.00
 SUBTOTAL \$1,036,410.90

TAX INCREMENT REVENUE SOURCES

POLK COUNTY	CITY OF LAKELAND	LAMTD	TOTAL
\$934,284.00	\$713,380.00	\$65,330.00	\$1,712,994.00

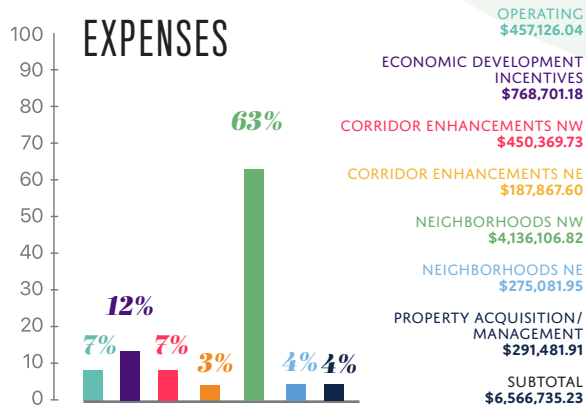
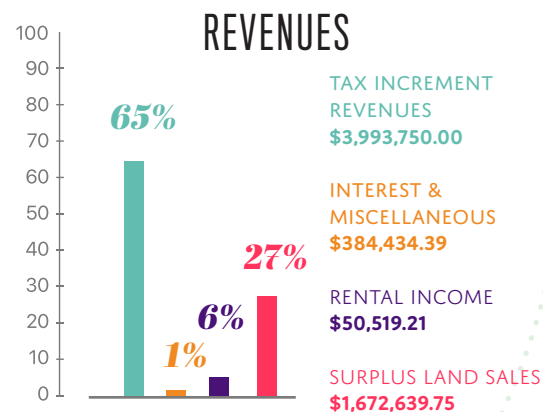


DIXIELAND

OPERATING \$11,885.52
 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES \$110,290.00
 CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS \$1,126.30
 NEIGHBORHOODS \$3,268.08
 SUBTOTAL \$126,569.90

TAX INCREMENT REVENUE SOURCES

POLK COUNTY	CITY OF LAKELAND	LAMTD	TOTAL
\$164,482.00	\$125,592.00	\$11,492.00	\$301,566.00



MIDTOWN

OPERATING \$457,126.04
 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES \$768,701.18
 CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS NW \$450,369.73
 CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS NE \$187,867.60
 NEIGHBORHOODS NW \$4,136,106.82
 NEIGHBORHOODS NE \$275,081.95
 PROPERTY ACQUISITION/MANAGEMENT \$291,481.91
 SUBTOTAL \$6,566,735.23

TAX INCREMENT REVENUE SOURCES

POLK COUNTY	CITY OF LAKELAND	LAMTD	TOTAL
\$2,177,515.00	\$1,662,658.00	\$153,577.00	\$3,993,750.00

COMMERCIAL INCENTIVES

DIXIELAND

DESIGN ASSISTANCE	\$5,469.24
FACADE AND SITE IMPROVEMENT	\$41,169.66
FOOD RELATED SERVICES	\$20,772.27
INFILL ADAPTIVE REUSE	\$22,559.92

DOWNTOWN

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING	\$166,623.64
SECOND FLOOR RENOVATIONS	\$17,641.44
INFILL ADAPTIVE REUSE	\$293,150.50

MIDTOWN

DESIGN ASSISTANCE	\$24,568.00
FACADE AND SITE IMPROVEMENT	\$129,871.38
INFILL ADAPTIVE REUSE	\$149,605.00
JOB CREATION INCENTIVE	\$210,000.00

RESIDENTIAL INCENTIVES

DOWNTOWN

FIX-IT UP (GARDEN DISTRICT)	\$16,380.00
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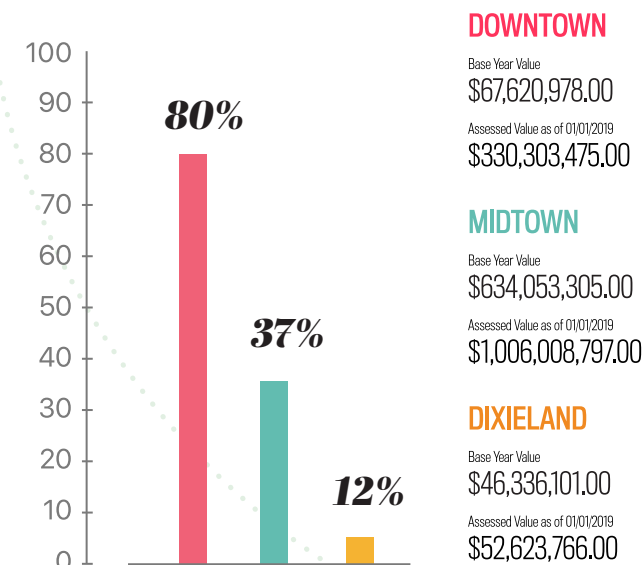
MIDTOWN

DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	\$151,374.10
FIX-IT UP (TARGET AREAS)	\$105,747.40
BUILDER'S LINE OF CREDIT	\$143,280.00
LINCOLN SQUARE	\$3,511,533.00

AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVES

\$3,928,314.50

PROPERTY VALUE INCREASES



DIXIELAND

Adopted in 2001, the Dixieland Redevelopment Plan outlined goals related to 1) Redevelopment Administration, 2) Redevelopment Policy, 3) Economic Development, 4) Public Facilities and Services, 5) Land Use, 6) Housing, and 7) Historic Preservation. All goals have either been accomplished or developed to promote and identify implementation opportunities. The following is a summary of Dixieland Redevelopment Plan goals and progress this reporting period:

GOAL	RELEVANT 2019 PROJECTS & ACTIONS
 <p>REDEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION</p> <p>Establish and administer financial mechanisms necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan.</p>	<p>Increased Grant Allocations and Grant Maximums for Dixieland CRA</p>
 <p>REDEVELOPMENT POLICY</p> <p>Prevent future occurrences of slum and blight.</p> <p>Encourage reuse of properties that no longer function at their highest potential economic use.</p>	<p>Patriot Coffee (Facade & Infill Improvement) Union Hall (Facade & Infill Improvement) The Vanguard Room (Design Assistance)</p>
 <p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Work closely with area businesses, merchants' associations, and the Chamber of Commerce to address the needs of existing businesses through the redevelopment process.</p> <p>Make the Redevelopment Area competitive with major activity centers in the region.</p>	<p>Patriot Coffee (Facade & Infill Improvement) Union Hall (Facade & Infill Improvement) The Vanguard Room (Design Assistance) Dixieland Mural Installation</p>
 <p>PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES</p> <p>Work closely with the MPO, FDOT, Polk County, and Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (LAMTD) to coordinate and establish priorities for proposed transportation improvements that will further the objectives of the Redevelopment Plan.</p> <p>Create a safe, secure, appealing, and efficient pedestrian system linking all major activity centers, parking facilities, alleyways, and other interchange points.</p>	<p>South Florida Avenue Road Diet Planning Citrus Connection Service Agreement Extension</p>
 <p>LAND USE</p> <p>Develop land uses and patterns that create and strengthen activity centers.</p> <p>Promote and locate strategic land use activities within the Dixieland Redevelopment Area that will support tourist and commercial attraction to the historic downtown.</p>	<p>Patriot Coffee (Facade & Infill Improvement) Union Hall (Facade & Infill Improvement) The Vanguard Room (Design Assistance)</p>
 <p>HOUSING</p> <p>Encourage private efforts toward building housing in the Redevelopment Area and adjacent neighborhoods.</p>	
 <p>HISTORIC PRESERVATION</p> <p>Establish a façade improvement program providing design assistance and financial incentives to encourage building renovations that will provide compatible design and strengthen existing architectural features.</p>	<p>Increased Grant Allocations and Grant Maximums for Dixieland CRA</p>

DOWNTOWN

The original Downtown Redevelopment Plan was adopted in 1980, with subsequent updates in 1990 and 2000 respectively. Between 2002 and 2005, there were two expansions of the Downtown Redevelopment Area that were adopted. The most recent update of the plan, "Downtown Lakeland, Redefining Our Goals, Refining Our Future", was adopted in 2009. The plan focused on guiding themes (Big Ideas) to advance vision of Downtown and outlines action items related to 1) Land Use, 2) Marketing and Recruitment, Governance and 3) Infrastructure. The following is a summary of Downtown's Redevelopment Plan goals and progress this reporting period:

GOAL	RELEVANT 2019 PROJECTS & ACTIONS
 <p>LAND USE/PHYSICAL VISION</p> <p>Develop specific "district design plans".</p> <p>Link Downtown venues during events.</p> <p>Pilot regional effort for passenger rail connecting Lakeland and Tampa.</p>	<p>Catalyst Development Plan</p> <p>Five Points Roundabout</p>
 <p>MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT</p> <p>Develop and implement marketing campaign.</p> <p>Identify and market incentives package.</p> <p>Create and issue development Requests for Proposals for LCRA and City owned parcels.</p> <p>Monitor the expansion area development.</p> <p>Link Lakeland Center (renamed RP Funding Center), Polk Theatre, and Downtown cultural and retail venues.</p>	<p>Catalyst Development Plan</p> <p>Tax Increment Financing Agreements (6)</p>
 <p>GOVERNANCE</p> <p>Coordinate the efforts of Downtown groups, defining and focusing their roles.</p> <p>Streamline regulatory and building permit processes.</p> <p>Create a position to help private developers and builders navigate the multifaceted permitting/approval process.</p> <p>Encourage small-scale development.</p>	<p>Catalyst Development Plan</p> <p>Swan Brewing (Facade & Infill Improvement)</p> <p>The Joinery (Facade & Infill Improvement)</p>
 <p>INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>Continue to assist with structured parking costs in downtown.</p> <p>Calm traffic and facilitate pedestrian crossing on Florida Avenue.</p> <p>Continued streetscape and pocket park opportunities. Assess a master stormwater solution OR evaluate site by site (owner) solution in lieu of master feasibility plan for redevelopment areas.</p>	<p>Heritage Parking Garage</p> <p>Downtown Central Dog Park (Funding Allocation)</p> <p>Catalyst Plan</p> <p>South Florida Avenue Road Diet Planning</p>

MIDTOWN

The Midtown Redevelopment Plan, which was also adopted in 2001, developed goals based on 1) the City of Lakeland's Comprehensive Plan, 2) Resident/Community Priorities, and 3) the City's 5-Year Consolidated Plan & Strategy (for housing and community development programs). While specific projects, neighborhoods, and activity centers were identified as priority, in addition to adherence to Florida statutes, plan goals emphasize four major areas, and those are listed below along with progress this cycle:

GOAL

RELEVANT 2019 PROJECTS & ACTIONS



PRESERVE AND ENHANCE NEIGHBORHOODS

Eliminate blighted neighborhoods and substandard housing conditions through a comprehensive program

Acquire buildable lots for housing.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Paths and Connections for transportation and recreation.

In-fill Development Activity to keep the neighborhood fresh.

Mass Transit Service.

Lincoln Square
West Lake Parker Shared Use Path
Kettles Avenue Sidewalk
Fix-It-Up Housing Renovations (6 recipients)
Down Payment Assistance (24 recipients)
Midtown Mural Installations
Citrus Connection Service Agreement Extension



DEFINE, DESIGN AND STRENGTHEN MIXED-USE ACTIVITY CENTERS

Grow the medical district on Lakeland Hills Blvd.

Place more value on Florida Avenue and Memorial Blvd.

Colorado Boxed Beef (Job Creation Incentive)
Boring Business (Façade Improvement)
Cannon Funeral Home (Façade Improvement)
Fusion Transport (Façade Improvement)
Coney Funeral Home (Design Assistance)
Watson Clinic Land Exchange



IDENTIFY AND BEAUTIFY DEVELOPMENT CORRIDORS IN MIDTOWN

Design standards that create functionally and aesthetically desirable results along targeted roadways

Economic Development

Five Points Roundabout
Boring Business (Façade Improvement)
Cannon Funeral Home (Façade Improvement)
Fusion Transport (Façade Improvement)
Coney Funeral Home (Design Assistance)
Tapatio's Restaurant (Façade & Infill Improvements)
Yard on Mass



CONTINUE TO IMPROVE AREA OPEN SPACE AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Crime prevention through increased law enforcement efforts in target neighborhoods.

Transit Improvements

Funding Affordable Housing Initiatives

Physical Safety Improvements

Community Policing Agreement with LPD
West Lake Parker Shared Use Path
Midtown Alley Cleanup
MLK to W 10th St. Improvements
Citrus Connection Service Agreement Extension

Midtown CRA is experiencing tremendous growth but also has the most room for additional opportunities. Upcoming small area plans will fortify the Mass Market Area and highlight additional affordable housing opportunities in the district. The Midtown CRA plan will also be analyzed to focus strategies and better position the district as it will sunset in just over a decade

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

21

PROJECTS INITIATED

6

PROJECTS COMPLETED

10

PENDING COMPLETION

5

FINAL PAYMENTS ISSUED IN FY2020

TOTAL ENCUMBRANCE

\$832,127.82

TOTAL EXPENDITURES

\$2,152,197.00

CAT·A·LYST

/ 'kɑd(ə)lɛst/

In 2009, the Lakeland CRA refined its Downtown Redevelopment Plan, identifying progress of the previous years and focusing on the changing landscape requiring a new framework for action items. Those action items included developing specific district design plans and identifying the maximum development potential. The Redevelopment Plan also emphasized the need for focus on governance and infrastructure assistance due to the nature of urban redevelopment and associated challenges with complimenting existing land uses and providing adequate utility services as well as parking to promote density. In order to dive deeper and generate a more time relevant approach, five Central Florida consulting firms, WMB-ROI, Lunz Group, Furr & Wegman Architects, S&ME and Kimley-Horn Associates, were engaged to provide a holistic view of potential (re) development opportunities within the Downtown Redevelopment Area. The mindset was dream big—enhance the plan!

Building on the thematic and contextual sub-districts that had been recognized a decade earlier, the Lakeland Downtown Catalyst Plan provided “on the ground visual perspective” linking the Sports & Entertainment District, which is home to the City’s convention and meeting center, RP Funding Center, the Gateway Corporate Park, boasting ideal access to Sikes Boulevard (SR-563) and Florida Avenue, and the northwest sub-district, home of the City’s iconic Frances Langford Promenade perched along the Massachusetts Avenue corridor. Mentioned, passively in the previous update, a pedestrian bridge connection from the Northeast sub-district to Lake Mirror, the Highline visually came to life for the first time.



Overall, across more than seventy parcels, the Catalyst Plan highlighted the City’s opportunity to spend strategically in the three key locations, to attract (re)development dollars and capture an additional \$1.7 million in annual tax revenues. The investment of approximately \$70 million in public improvements would stimulate projects downtown and generate momentum for smaller scale projects to occur as well, resulting in \$420 million in private dollars at an average return on investment of 6:1. Additionally, The Economic Impact component emphasized that execution of the full plan could yield almost 11,000 new jobs, over \$400 million in employee earnings and nearly a billion dollars in total output to the City and County economies after five years of operation.

The Catalyst Plan was an exercise in leveraging both public and private investment to make the most of resources. Now armed with a set of exceptional architectural renderings combined with realistic market conditions to generate marketable development opportunities, the CRA can now be strategic in forecasting incentives across multiple budget cycles so that impacts are both predictable and attainable. The engagement from the general public, key stakeholders and elected officials has created quite the buzz. Ideally, the Catalyst Plan represents twenty years of future growth that will carry the City beyond the life of the Downtown CRA which expires in 2035.

[VIEW FULL CATALYST PLAN](#)



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ENHANCING SPACES.
CONNECTING PLACES.
BUILDING COMMUNITY.

This year's annual report speaks to the collaboration between businesses, developers, and property owners in the Dixieland, Downtown, and Midtown redevelopment districts to improve the quality of life for residents and stimulate economic growth. Lakeland CRA's incentives are attractive and financially beneficial to large companies, small businesses and developers alike. These snapshots highlight three businesses, one in each redevelopment district, which have partnered with Lakeland CRA to meet their goals while contributing to our goals for the community. Our work encompasses the core of Economic Development!

THEIR SUCCESS IS OUR SUCCESS!

Established in 2018 after two years of planning, Swan Brewing produced approximately 1,400 gallons of twenty (20) various beer flavors which served the taproom. The business experienced a high level of patronage, quickly becoming a household name in Lakeland. Eventually, the owner saw the need to expand the Downtown location to increase production capabilities and infrastructure to service local Lakeland bars and restaurant demands. In order to meet the new capacity and distribution needs, Swan Brewing needed to add cold storage, fermenters, and additional keg cooperage. The Lakeland CRA Advisory Board was enthusiastic about approving assistance to expand "Lakeland's Brewery". The grant was instrumental in helping a small and relatively young brewery meet the demand for local brews, and to remain competitive in a growing market!

SWAN BREWING

115 West Pine Street
CRA: Downtown
Lakeland CRA Investment: \$61,257.00



UNION HALL

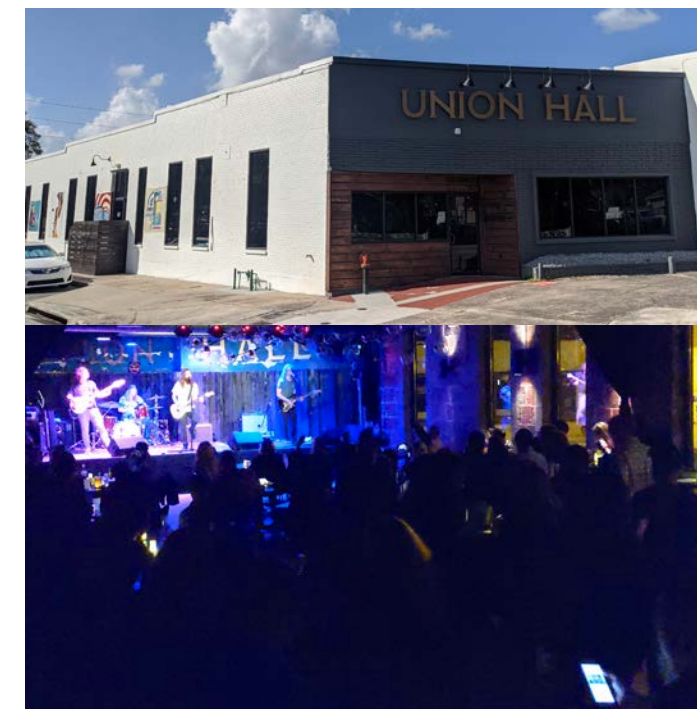
1023 South Florida Avenue
CRA: Dixieland
Lakeland CRA Investment: \$80,000.00

Located in the Dixieland District, Union Hall is an Urban Industrial Event Space and Concert Venue (www.unionhallevents.com) that offers a variety of services and entertainment including catering, live music, dinner shows and game nights. Union Hall is the business owner's second Dixieland building renovation. The Community Redevelopment Agency assisted with interior and exterior improvements to the building which has historic significance. In combination, grants were awarded for Façade and Site Improvements, Food Related Services, and Infill Adaptive Re-use. The interior was demolished to the studs and new lighting, stage, bar, HVAC, and electrical were installed. The exterior façade was rehabbed and new signage installed. Time and financial investments were tremendous on the part of the business owner, and the CRA's commitment to the project helped to close the financing gap. In April of 2019, Union Hall opened for business and has been thriving ever since.

FUSION LOGISTICS SERVICES

1212 East Main Street
CRA: Dixieland
Lakeland CRA Investment: \$75,000.00

Fusion Logistics Services core services include transportation, logistics, and 3PL (third party logistics). With plans to expand and grow business, the company relocated from Plant City to Lakeland and identified a location within the Midtown CRA. The project was awarded a \$75,000.00 matching grant for Façade & Infill Adaptive Reuse. The building underwent major interior renovations and the company also invested in façade and parking lot improvements. The project was completed in 2019. During the grand opening and ribbon cutting, hosted by the Lakeland Chamber of Commerce, the owners noted how grateful they were for the partnership with Lakeland CRA, and that the grant award significantly impacted the ability to complete the improvements. They also noted their excitement about being located in the Midtown CRA where so many new Lakeland business activities are occurring. Fusion Logistics Services is another example of a smaller business that embraced the potential of doing business in the City of Lakeland, and partnered with Lakeland CRA for success.





WATCH LOGO REVEAL



**THE YARD
ON MASS**

On the steps to Downtown Lakeland lies a unique backyard party for the whole family! Located at 802 N Massachusetts Avenue on what used to be a used car lot, the Yard On Mass is a redevelopment project, years in the making. In 2017, while brainstorming in the office, CRA staff bounced around the idea of a food truck park on the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Parker Street. While seeking out partners, the CRA Advisory Board heard from returning Lakelanders, Joel and Jennifer Batts along with their partners, Craig Morby and Matt Patrick. The pitch was exactly what seemed to fit the vision for the block--an area for art and entertainment. The CRA bought in and committed \$250,000 to support the construction of a new building on the southeast corner of the existing lot. The Yard On Mass is contiguous to Mass Market, a previous CRA redevelopment project that houses an event venue, commercial kitchen space, office collective, art gallery, an urban farm and affordable apartments. The Yard's newly constructed taproom mirrors the architectural style of Mass Market with a black-and-white motif.

“THE YARD ON MASS IS THE BACKYARD PARTY YOUR NEIGHBORS WON'T COMPLAIN ABOUT AND YOU DON'T NEED AN INVITATION, BECAUSE EVERYONE'S WELCOME!”

THE YARD IS THE PERFECT SPOT FOR OLD FRIENDS AND NEW TO GATHER FOR ECLECTIC FOOD TRUCKS, CRAFT BEER, A GLASS OF WINE OR A REFRESHING COCKTAIL. RELAX INSIDE OR OUT AND ENJOY LIVE MUSIC, TAKE PART IN GAMES ON THE LAWN, OR HOST AN EVENT. STOP BY AND SAY HELLO – WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU!”

VERMONT APTS

Through partnership with the City, the CRA acquired several properties from an individual that had been identified as a troubled owner and repeat code enforcement violator. The properties were the locations of illegal dumping, criminal activity and homeless camping. Upon acquisition, the CRA had the properties cleaned-up, boarded and regularly monitored for trespassing. Of the properties acquired, two properties, 912 and 920 N. Vermont Avenue, housed two apartment buildings that needed extensive renovation. These two properties had a monthly carrying cost of \$1,725.

In March of 2019, Dr. Brenda Reddout, the Executive Director of Talbot House Ministries, expressed interest in acquisition of these apartments buildings and converting them into 16 affordable units with the intent to lease them as workforce and disabled housing. Talbot House operates 10 units of permanent supportive housing and 20 transitional units as a part of its portfolio. However, the length of stay is roughly 4 years due to shortage in affordable stock. Rather than take on the renovation project, valued at \$750,000, the CRA partnered by providing the property along with a \$50,000 funding commitment. The projected rents will range from \$250-\$600 based on income.



FIX-IT-UP

One of the ways in which the CRA strives to improve Housing is through our Fix-It Up (FIU) program. Initially, FIU provided up to \$5,000 worth of improvements to the exterior of homes located within four target areas of Midtown; it was available to both homesteaders and landlords. The program was modified to add two new target areas, prohibit landlords and introduce Level II which provided up to \$25,000 worth of improvements if the house had roof damage and/or termites. We averaged 14 houses annually from 2015 through 2018. Approximately three months into 2019, FIU was placed on hold as we transitioned its administration to our Housing Division. We still managed to improve seven homes with a total investment of \$115,017.40.



“God has been so good; I'm extremely happy with how my home looks! The CRA and Mr. Bethel (contractor) took great care of me. Mr. Bethel treated my home as if it was his own.”

LINCOLN SQUARE

Two years ago, Lincoln Square was nothing more than a list of potential buyers and five acres of open field next door to Lincoln Avenue Academy, a top International Baccalaureate program and the #1 elementary school in Polk County. The landscape changed significantly over the course of a year as every home pre-sold prior to groundbreaking, and droves of former residents of the Paul A. Diggs and Webster Park neighborhoods realized an opportunity to return to the neighborhood they once thought was in decline. Today, prototypical architecture defines the streetscape, and the new residents beam with pride.

One of the first to move-in, Heather Celoria, is an ordained minister, marketing manager and third generation Lakelander who serves on the City's Advisory Committee for Affordable Housing. Heather wanted to move into Lincoln Square to become a part of a community "that has a little more intentionality." She lives with her two college aged children and has enjoyed meeting the new neighbors. When she described her partnership with the CRA she said, "It was a little bit of a leap of faith to go through the process on having a home built in Lincoln Square, but we are thrilled with the quality of the home and the support that we received from CRA through this process." Incoming residents have called Lincoln Square a life-altering opportunity. Buyers are paying \$125,000 despite appraised prices of \$150,000. With the CRA not being profit driven like a private developer, the increased benefits are passed along to buyers after a ten-year homestead. Families are already talking about sending their children to college or starting future businesses. Heather added,

"Lakeland is doing great things! It has been fun to see the growth of Lakeland as a community that values diversity, arts and culture, and business investment. I think this is a strong investment in Lakeland that will pay dividends in our quality of life."

WATCH LINCOLN SQUARE STORY



REBUILDING NEIGHBORHOODS

ARTS & CULTURE

Art is bringing new life to Lakeland!

It started with collaborating with the Working Artist Studio to incorporate tapestries within the CRA districts to brighten the alley ways and enhance buildings along major corridors. It then led to consideration for how the CRA might be able to encourage diversity of thought and unity within the community. This year's artistic endeavor is an enhancement to our trail system. What was originally planned as a walking path, the Lake Parker Shared Use Path will historically depict the love for Lakeland through the eyes of a child. The path, a partnership with the Polk County School Board, highlights Lakeland's history through the decades. Students from ten local schools ranging from elementary to high school researched Lakeland's history and created a beautiful collection of art. The schools participating in the project are:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Rochelle School of the Arts | Highland City Elementary |
| Spessard Holland Elementary | Jesse Keen Elementary |
| Lake Region High School | Lake Gibson Middle School |
| George Jenkins High | Lake Gibson High School |
| Highland Grove Elementary | Lakeland High School |

The path will feature student work with 157 individually crafted pavers along the border and nine feature pieces in the center of the path. The feature pieces will be 8'x8' student designed, but rendered by professional artists. The collaboration with the professional artists were made possible by the great partnership created during the tapestry project. Construction along the path began at the close of 2019 and is scheduled for completion spring 2020. The project will be a 10-foot-wide multi-use path spanning just over a mile. The path is an integral section connecting the local and state bike path systems. The project budget is \$820,000 and will include new benches and shade structures along the path.

WATCH SHARED PATH STORY



LAKE PARKER SHARED USE PATH





Public art invokes emotion and brings a sense of community pride that cannot be bought.

Seeing the value of art as a tool to support redevelopment in the districts, the CRA Advisory Board approved recurring allocations for future arts funding of \$25,000. Here are the artists who contributed to this year's murals!





TIM HAAS

 @TIMHAASARTISTRY
 863.224.1396

(DIXIELAND) SOUTHSIDE CLEANERS

In March, the 2nd CRA commissioned mural was unveiled to the public. Outside of the popular Southside Cleaners, located at 901 Florida Ave South, Tim Haas created an ambiguous scene. This creative masterpiece is something that the whole family can enjoy.

AHMAD TAYLOR

 @THEATLANTAILLUSTRATOR
 THEATLANTAILLUSTRATOR.COM

(MIDTOWN) BORING BUSINESS CENTER

The final commissioned mural is of a scene that is all too familiar to those who enjoy Downtown Lakeland. The Lake Mirror Loggia is featured with several iconic Lakeland symbols. Ahmad Taylor, an outstanding artist, with roots in Lakeland partnered with students at Rochelle School of the Arts to paint this welcoming gateway to Downtown.

"I know so many creatives who live in Lakeland, participate in and advocate for the local art scene," Taylor said. "It's a matter of tapping those creatives, allowing them to become part of the workforce so they don't leave and go to other cities."



GABRIELA JAXON

 @GABRIELAJAXON
 @GABRIELAJAXON  GABRIELAJAXON.COM

(DOWNTOWN) THOM DOWNS ANTIQUES

In January, a 34-foot tall mural was completed by the talented muralist Gabriela Jaxon at 235 N. Florida Ave. Born in Peru, but a Lakelander since the age of 8, this artist has elevated Downtown with her spray-mural named Goddess Amphitrite. Gabriela's portfolio includes work in Brooklyn, NY and Miami.



WATCH GABRIELA'S STORY

WWW.LAKELANDCRA.NET

PHOTO CREDIT: TOM HAGERTY, JORDAN WEILAND

VIDEO CREDIT: LOUD LIFE PRODUCTIONS, CITY OF LAKELAND

GRAPHIC DESIGN: SIERRA CREATIVE LLC

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1ST THURSDAY AT 3:00PM

CITY COMMISSION

CONFERENCE ROOM

CITY COMMISSION MEETINGS

1ST AND 3RD MONDAYS AT

3:00PM

CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS

LAKELAND DOWNTOWN

DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

3RD THURSDAYS AT 8:00AM

CITY COMMISSION

CONFERENCE ROOM

