

RELATE. RENOVATE. **REINVIGORATE.**



What is the CRA?

Thank you for taking a peek at our annual report. Maybe you're wondering who we are.

We are your Community Redevelopment Agency - a division of the City of Lakeland that focuses on areas that need attention, which is provided through renovated buildings, business opportunities, affordable housing, better infrastructure, and unique art and cultural offerings. Each of the three CRA districts (Downtown, Dixieland and Midtown) has their own redevelopment plan which outlines the specific district's needs and the types of projects the CRA is allowed to undertake in the district.

Simply put, we build partnerships. We bring together residents, property owners, developers, architects, engineers, and artists – or anyone who might contribute to community improvement projects in one of our districts. One relationship at a time, we work to redevelop Lakeland into the best it can be.

Florida Law states a CRA's charge is to "address blight, rehabilitate and preserve the community redevelopment areas, reduce crime, create affordable housing, and enhance the tax base. Redevelopment activities within the CRA generate benefits that are ultimately shared with the entire community."

The dollars the CRA expends are earned through a process called Tax Increment Financing (TIF). When someone develops one of our properties, the tax rate grows, and we set aside a portion of those additional tax funds for CRA use within that district. Bottom line: CRA projects are undertaken to increase the area's tax base and thus, return the investment over time. The City Commission is the CRA. An Advisory Board reviews, refines, and makes recommendations for project approvals to the Commission. CRA staff keeps the projects in motion. That's one part of our public accountability. This annual report is another.



The CRA strives to Relate. Renovate. Reinvigorate. with every project we undertake.

ALIS **DRUMGO**

Assistant Director of Economic Development

The CRA's annual report is more than compliance—it is an opportunity to connect with you, the community. There is much success to share since 2021 was a feverish environment for (re)development with one hundred and five (105) grants and projects initiated across all three Community Redevelopment Areas.

The projects spanned from leveraging \$300,000 in professional design services, which resulted in 4.5 million-dollars in future funding from Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), to reconstruct a corridor identified as a community concern to supporting the major renovation of a building once occupied by a family business for nearly eight decades. CRA staff oversaw construction of The Well, a small business resource center four years in the making,



which will provide services and an atmosphere of collaboration that will breathe life into the Parker Street and North Lake Wire Neighborhoods.

The CRA strives to Relate. Renovate.
Reinvigorate. with every project we undertake. We want you to embrace the CRA's commitment to making the City of Lakeland a great place to live, work, and play.

all play

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OUR **TEAM** OUR **BOARD**

LAKELAND COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY STAFF

Alis Drumao

Assistant Director of Economic Development D'Ariel Reed Senior Project Manager Iyanna Jones Project Manager

Carlos Turner Office Support Specialist II

LAKELAND MAYOR & CITY COMMISSION

William "Bill" Mutz Mayor Stephanie Madden Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley Commissioner Chad McLeod Commissioner Mike Musick Commissioner Bill Read Commissioner Phillip Walker Commissioner

CITY OF LAKELAND STAFF

Shawn Sherrouse City Manager Emily Colón Assistant City Manager

Brian Rewis Director of Community and Economic Development

LAKELAND COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Harry Bryant Midtown Terry Coney Midtown Frank Lansford Midtown Brandon Eady Downtown Kate Lake Downtown

Brian Goding Dixieland Brian Waller Dixieland Tyler Zimmerman Dixieland Teresa O'Brien At large Chad McLeod Commissioner

Chrissanne Long Downtown





BRANDON EADY Lakeland CRA Chair

Like in many things, it is easy to lose sight of the "why" of what we do at the CRA. And it's nice to occasionally remind ourselves of the purpose of our mission. To me, redevelopment is a means to an end. And that end is improving the lives of those who live, work, and enjoy Downtown, Dixieland, and Midtown. From longtime residents to business owners to those discovering an area for the first time, each is a stakeholder, and we have the opportunity to impact their lives.

Our purpose is to spur redevelopment in our three CRA districts. Sometimes that means recruiting investment for projects. Sometimes redevelopment is fostering relationships within our communities. And other times, redevelopment is testing what is possible in an area that's been overlooked for decades. Ultimately, redevelopment is about making our city a better place by improving lives. Whether it's funding Down Payment Assistance Grants for homebuyers, building a new facility for a community-driven organization, rehabilitating, and bringing life to a dilapidated property, or finding the right partner for a major development, our purpose is to make our illustrious city glow even brighter.





Looking back at 2021, all of us can say this was no ordinary year. I feel fortunate to look back and see extraordinary work accomplished by immensely talented staff members and Board Members who genuinely love Lakeland, our home. I'm very proud of our CRA. I know more great things are to come.

CHAD MCLEOD City Commission Appointee

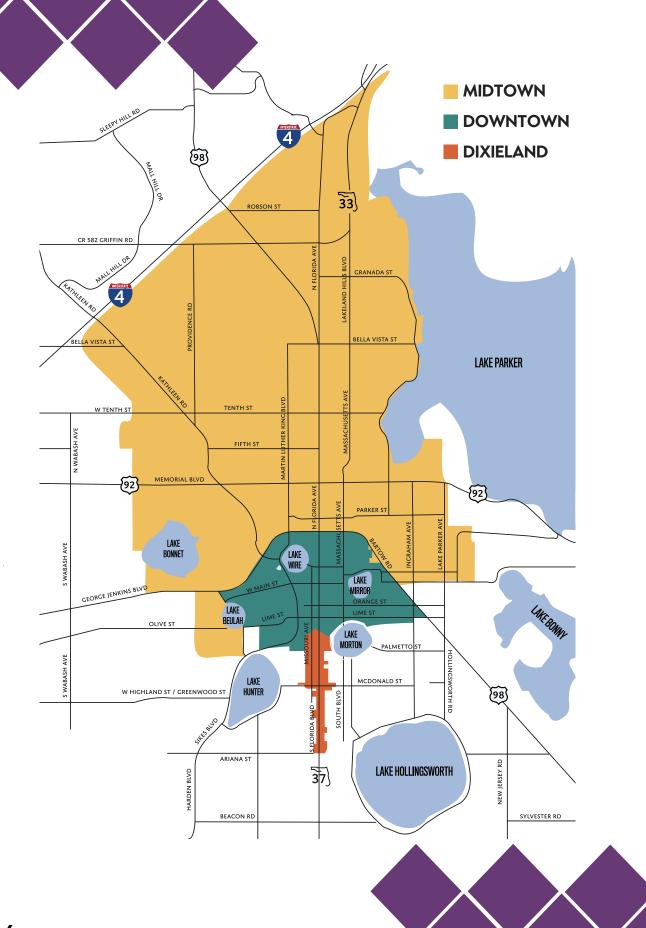
Lakeland's CRA continues to play a vital role in the growth and revitalization that we see throughout our city. From the Art Infusion program in Dixieland to The Well in Midtown, the CRA has helped launch many exciting projects this past year — bringing new life and vibrancy to these parts of our city.

As we look ahead, we have additional redevelopment projects in the works for 2022 and beyond that will improve the quality of life for Lakeland residents.



The City Commission is grateful to the CRA staff and advisory board members, whose vision and leadership help us plan for our city's future.







Midtown, with its 4,463 acres, is the largest of the three CRA Districts, spanning from the in-town bypass to Interstate-4. The area is anchored by the medical district, Joker Marchant Stadium, and the redeveloped Mass Market. This district includes 21 active and engaged registered residential neighborhoods.

DOWNTOWN

Downtown Lakeland comprises 555 acres, with the core being a bustling center of specialty retail, dining options, and a growing arts and entertainment scene. Centered around Munn Park, the downtown redevelopment area is walkable and aesthetically pleasing because of multi-million-dollar investments in capital and streetscape improvements. With new residential growth, Downtown is primed to reach its potential.

DIXIELAND

Dixieland CRA is approximately 73-acres of commercial corridor with a collection of vintage retail and boutique shops. A budding restaurant and coffeehouse scene draws creatives to connect and collaborate. Dixieland is the gateway to Downtown's arts & entertainment center.

2021 SNAPSHOT

grants & projects initiated

in progress

grants & projects completed

FINANCIAL

MIDTOWN

REVENUES	EXPENSES	
INTEREST & MISC.	AFFORDABLE HOUSING \$521,820.52	NEIGHBORHOODS \$67,671.92
\$546,461.00 RENTAL INCOME	COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES \$436,815.12	OPERATING \$645,544.53
\$123,475.00	CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS \$434,395.12	PROPERTY ACQUISITION/ MANAGEMENT \$418,336.81
TAX INCREMENT REVENUES \$4,415,865.00	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES \$1,715,841.90	
TOTAL \$5,085,801.00	TOTAL \$4,240,425.92	

DOWNTOWN

REVENUES	EXPENSES		
INTEREST & MISC. \$403,128.00	COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES \$29,859.96	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES \$1,167,429.42	
TAX INCREMENT REVENUES \$1,730,678.00	CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS \$150,782.31	OPERATING \$77,267.94	
	DEBT SERVICE \$400,000.00	PROPERTY ACQUISITION/ MANAGEMENT \$2,607.61	
TOTAL \$2.133.806.00	TOTAL \$1.827.947.24		

DIXIELAND

REVENUES	EXPENSES	
INTEREST & MISC. \$116,962.00	COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES \$3,347.04	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES \$148,717.34
TAX INCREMENT REVENUES \$299,301.00	CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS \$14,336.77	OPERATING \$10,490.06
TOTAL \$416,263.00	TOTAL \$176,891.21	

REVENUE BY DISTRICT

MIDTOWN \$5,085,801.00

DOWNTOWN \$2,133,806.00

DIXIELAND \$416,263.00

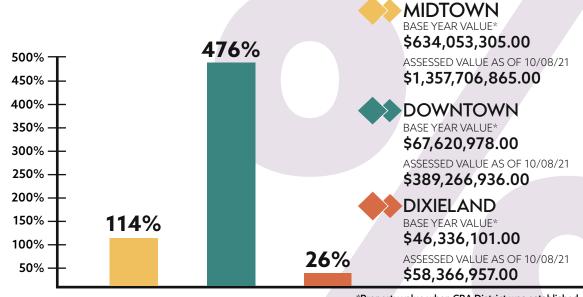
RELATE, RENOVATE. REINVIGORATE

EXPENSES BY DISTRICT

MIDTOWN \$4,240,425.92 **DOWNTOWN** \$1,827,947.24

DIXIELAND \$176,891.21

PROPERTY VALUE **INCREASES**



*Property value when CRA District was established

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2021 GOALS & ACTIONS

The Midtown Redevelopment Plan, adopted in 2001, developed goals based on the City of Lakeland's Comprehensive Plan, Resident/Community Priorities, and 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 adherence to Florida statutes, plan goals emphasize four major areas, listed below:

2021 GOALS

PRESERVE & ENHANCE NEIGHBORHOODS

Eliminate blighted neighborhoods and substandard housing conditions through a comprehensive program.



Acquire buildable lots for housing.

Establish pedestrian and bicycle paths and connections for transportation and recreation.

Develop infill activity to keep the neighborhood fresh.

Provide mass transit service.



DEFINE, DESIGN, AND STRENGTHEN MIXED-USE ACTIVITY CENTERS

Grow the medical district on Lakeland Hills Boulevard.

Place more value on Florida Avenue and Memorial Boulevard.



IDENTIFY AND BEAUTIFY DEVELOPMENT CORRIDORS IN MIDTOWN

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

Support economic development.

CONTINUE TO IMPROVE AREA OPEN SPACE AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES AND FACILITIES



Increase law enforcement efforts for crime prevention in target neighborhoods.

Improve transit.

Fund affordable housing initiatives.

Make physical safety improvements.

2021 GRANTS & PROJECTS

INITIATED

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETED

FEATURED PROJECT CONEY FUNERAL HOME

Coney Funeral Home has operated in Lakeland since 1987. Current business owners, Sonji Coney Williams and Andrew Williams were operating in a 3,200 square foot building on Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue. After seeing their business triple in 8 years, the Williamses knew they had to expand. When property became available on West Memorial Boulevard, they planned to rehabilitate an old structure for a second location; however, it was determined the old building could not safely be restored. That's when Lakeland CRA stepped in. "The CRA basically said they wanted us to have a building that would make us and the city proud. They understood that demolishing a building and starting from dirt would cost us more, but they showed us grants we were eligible for and assisted with architects and contractors. When the CRA board approved our project, they worked collaboratively with our bank," says Andrew Williams.

With twice the square footage of the original building, the new facility also has on-site refrigeration and is handicap accessible. It opened before the COVID-19 surge and has allowed the company to better serve the community. The original Coney Funeral Home building is still used as a chapel.



When I thought I wasn't going to be able to do what I wanted to, the CRA stepped in to help and made it even better.

- Andrew Williams, VP Coney Funeral Home









FEATURED PROJECT

THE WELL

New to the Midtown district is an exciting collaborative business and event space at The Well. The former Lighthouse Ministries building had fallen into disrepair, becoming a blight on the neighborhood, when Lakeland CRA began searching for tenants to take over the property. Dr. Sallie Brisbane-Stone and husband Mario Stone presented an ideal project: a business co-working space centering women, minorities, and veterans with opportunities and resources to collaborate and network through education, entertainment, and culturally inspired programming.



The CRA made a commitment to the dream, and they took a risk. - Dr. Sallie Stone, Executive Director of The Well





EDUCATION
NETWORKING
OPPORTUNITY
ARTISTS
PROFESSIONALS
START UPS





"The CRA is an extraordinary team. When the decision was made to demolish the previous building and build from scratch, we were included in conversations with the architect, and they paid attention to what we wanted. We didn't get everything, but we understand the CRA has parameters for funding," says Dr. Brisbane-Stone.

To develop the space, the CRA brought together the Stones, Furr, Wegman & Banks Architects, and Miller Construction to design and build the facility. The result: a \$1.3 million open, multi-functional building for coworking, private offices, an audio/video studio, and the capacity for a 2nd floor. Local artist Kent McAllister painted a vibrant mural, with a nod to local Black History, on the building's east exterior wall. The overall look is modern, industrial, and urban, with large windows and comfortable earth tone furniture. Dr. Brisbane-Stone is grateful for the meticulous details architect Aaron Banks incorporated at her request.

Dr. Brisbane-Stone's vision for The Well is to be a flexible workspace used by a diverse community of independent professionals, startups, and teams from small to large businesses. Artists are invited to showcase and sell their work in The Well on a rotating basis. She has established collaborations with Mid-Florida Credit Union, Florida Southern College, Florida Polytechnic University, and Catapult, among others. More ideas for future neighborhood improvements are already cooking.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable housing is generally defined as safe and decent housing for which the cost is no more than 30% of household income. Both the City of Lakeland Housing Division and Lakeland CRA have been addressing needs for years.



An early step for the CRA was to build on the city's Fix-It-Up program for cosmetic repairs by assisting with structural improvements, such as roofing or termite repairs, that require permitting. As programs evolved, it made sense to layer the city's housing division's efforts with CRA contributions. The City and CRA have each committed to provide \$250,000 a year for the next few years to incentivize affordable housing.

LAND BANK

The Land Bank is an inventory of property that can be transformed for affordable housing. The CRA sells this land to developers at 120% of assessed value, if they agree to develop and sell it to someone who qualifies for affordable housing. The intent of the program is to replace vacant infill lots that the city has been maintaining with new low to moderate income homebuyers.

VERMONT DUPLEXES

For the Vermont Duplex Property, the Lakeland CRA paid for workable designs, construction plans, and permitting fees that meet city codes for smaller lots accommodating duplexes, which saves design fees and permitting for a developer. If the developer later sells the property to a qualified buyer, they can apply for reimbursement of impact fees. The builders' line of credit is an incentive for new construction and rental development specifically for affordable housing.

TWIN LAKES PHASE I

Twins Lakes Estates was developed to replace the old West Lake Apartments public housing community. Those units were originally built in the 1940s and rehabbed in the 1980s, but they needed to be demolished due to outdated electrical and plumbing work, small street sizes, and more. The original 120 public housing units will be replaced with 318 public housing and tax credit housing units. Phase I is a 100-unit elderly only building. Phase II is 134 multifamily housing units – 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms. Phase III will consist of 84 multifamily housing units, scheduled to begin construction in late 2022.





These projects uplift the whole community.

- Wardell Williams, Impeccable Construction

2021 GOALS & ACTIONS TOWN

The original Downtown Redevelopment Plan was adopted in 1980, with subsequent updates in 1990 and 2000. The most recent update of the plan, adopted in 2009, outlines the goals and action items below:

2021 GOALS



LAND USE/PHYSICAL VISION

Develop specific "district design plans."

Link Downtown venues during events.

Pilot regional effort for passenger rail connecting Lakeland and Tampa.

MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

Develop and implement marketing campaign.

Identify and market an incentives package.



Create and issue development Requests for Proposals for LCRA and city-owned parcels.

Monitor the expansion area development.

Link RP Funding Center, Polk Theatre, and Downtown cultural and retail venues.

GOVERNANCE



Coordinate the efforts of Downtown groups, defining and focusing their roles.

Streamline regulatory and building permit process.

Create a position to help private developers and builders navigate the multifaceted permitting/approval process.

INFRASTRUCTURE



Continue to assist with structured parking costs Downtown.

Calm traffic and facilitate pedestrian crossing on Florida Avenue.

Continue to seek 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.

2021 GRANTS & PROJECTS

INITIATED

N PROGRESS

COMPLETED

FEATURED PROJECT

Downtown is the city's hub, home to city government, restaurants, and retail, even a Curb market. Many recent improvements have been made courtesy of the Lakeland CRA, and we've shared information on Mirrorton, The Joinery, the Federal Building, and more in previous annual reports. Downtown is walkable and aesthetically pleasing because of multimillion-dollar investments in capital and streetscape improvements. The CRA's goal is to revitalize existing historic buildings and support redevelopment that complements those historic buildings.

GARDEN DISTRICT

"With the development of three major multi-family projects within this area over the past two years, plans created years ago for the Garden District are coming to fruition," said Emily Foster, Senior Planner, Historic Preservation for the City. "The CRA has been instrumental in revitalization, providing financial incentives that make these projects feasible."

Vacant property generates very little property tax and can contribute to a run-down appearance in the neighborhood. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) creates an incentive for developers to build on that land. New development means additional property tax; standard TIF agreements return 50% of those new taxes to the developer for five years, creating a win-win.

2021 brought the approval of two apartment buildings on Lime Street and Lake Avenue. Now, a 22-unit apartment complex is under construction on East Lemon Street. The one-acre site will have five, two-story buildings containing a mix of one-and two-bedroom apartments, to be called Royal Oak. The project's estimated cost is more than \$2.8 million. Developer Jason Lewis has invested in the community and has plans for additional properties in the works. Lewis credits the CRA's TIF agreements with making his work in Lakeland possible.

Though he lives in San Diego, he has ties to the area and uses all local contractors. He's grateful for the collaboration he's found. "Steve Boyington with The Lunz Group took a chance on me and is my architect, and we work with Miller Construction. I take pride in my projects and want them to fit into the historic district."



We believe the Garden
District will continue
its upward trajectory
as a highly-desired
neighborhood and
gateway into
Downtown
Lakeland.

- Emily Foster, Senior Planner, Historic Preservation



OPENING SUMMER 2022

ORANGE STREET APARTMENTS



THE GARDENS APARTMENTS

Broadway Real Estate developed a 90-unit complex named The Gardens, on South Lake Avenue, which opened in 2021 and was approved for a modified TIF. Proximity to downtown restaurants and retail make these highly desirable housing units.



The TIF money was very helpful in getting the project started, as costs have increased significantly over the past several years. We certainly need more multi-family housing in downtown.

- Tom Anderson, CFO, Broadway Real Estate **OPENING SPRING 2022**

ROYAL OAK APARTMENTS







Scan the QR code to learn more about this project.

RELATE RENOVATE REINVIGORATE





For 78 years, Nathan's Men's Store was a downtown institution, at the corner of Main Street and Kentucky Avenue.

It was owned and operated by the Estroff family, until Harris Estroff's retirement in 2021. JB Partners Realty, with a nearby office, purchased the property, and with grant funding from Lakeland CRA, was able to expand its use.

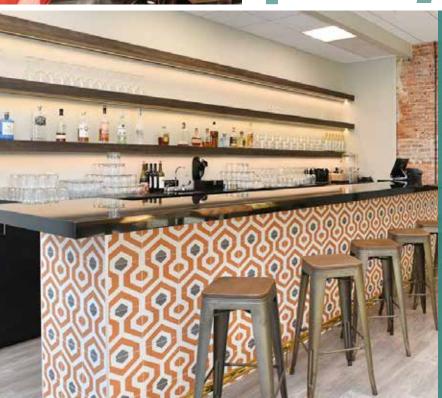
Through an infill adaptive reuse grant from the Lakeland CRA, upgrades were made for safety, security, and ADA compliance.









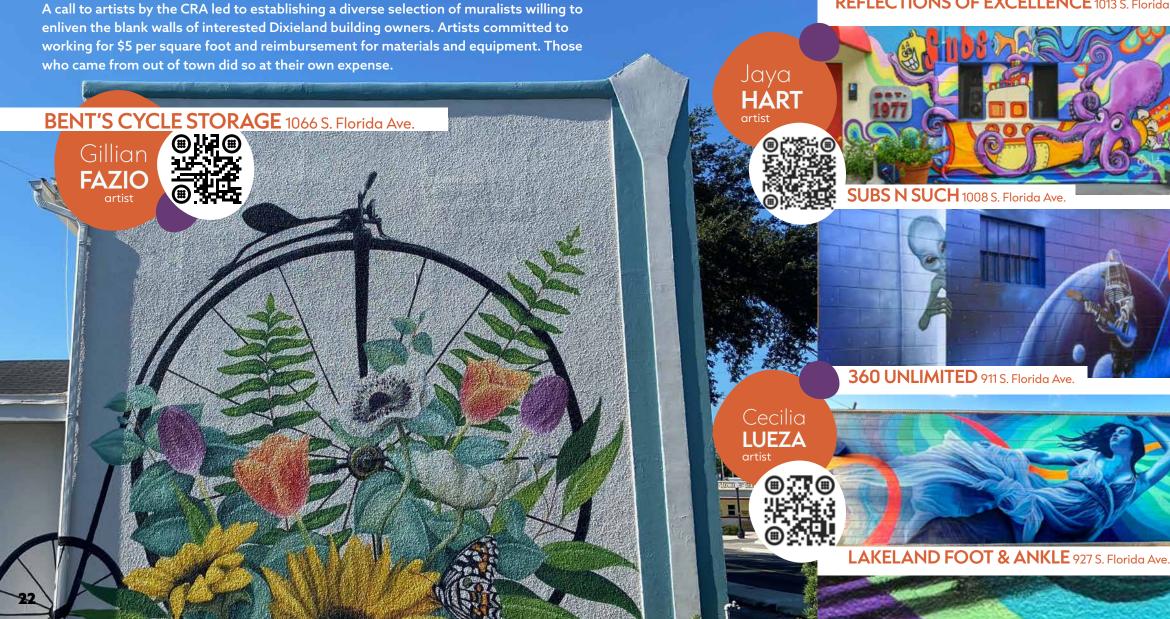


The 9,000 square ft. property was updated and now houses a bank on the first floor and maintains the historic look of the area. A banquet space was created, with access from Kentucky Avenue and adjacent to the Nineteen61 restaurant. Grant dollars primarily supported the renovation of an unused 2nd floor to house a STEM-related business, where the offices of engineering firm Kimley-Horn now reside.

ART INFUSION

Driving down Lakeland's narrow South Florida Avenue corridor used to be an annoying fact of life; today, that drive through Dixieland is a visual delight. When the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) began the road realignment test, the CRA saw a creative opportunity to invest in further improving the Dixieland community. The 72.6-acre commercial corridor has become a vibrant, culturally pleasing, and popular art display. As a bonus, the businesses sporting the dramatic touches have seen growth in awareness and business.

In addition, several district business owners took advantage of CRA support for façade improvements, such as awnings and exterior paint (separate from murals) to upgrade their property.







DIXIELAND FEATURED PROJECTS

LOW COUNTRY VINTAGE



Kate **HALL** artist

Artist Kate Hall had her eyes on the large blank wall of Low CountryVintage, but property owner Allyson Barr needed cash for labor, materials, and equipment rental. A crowd-funding plan fell short but raised attention. When the Dixieland Art Infusion project was announced, Barr and Hall were first in line.

The mural does attract people. They stop and take pictures. It's good for City, and businesses are putting more into other improvements.

Hall says the crape myrtle design has old Southern charm and fits with what the store was trying to achieve. Barr is pleased with other opportunities to partner with the CRA. Funding is available to reimburse business owners for improvements such as lighting, awnings, and signs. Low Country Vintage was recently approved to receive awnings through the CRA.



DIXIELAND MALL

I wanted something to represent the city, and I liked lighter colors to fit the building's design.

Charly

MALPASS

artist



Everyone loves it. I get comments from all over our community.

Cory **PETCOFF**

- President of Baron Realty and building owner



Artist Christian Stanley collaborated with the CRA and building owner Brett

Vogeler on his unique mural for South Florida Gun and Pawn. Stanley credits

CRA staff for mediating a brainstorming session to discuss direction for the project and later accommodating a request to enhance the design by expanding a portion of the mural. "We wanted a knight because of the suit or armor outside the entrance, and the owner wanted something bold and fantastical." Stanley's inspiration led to a brightly colored astronaut knight design with a cleverly placed chess pawn. Vogeler says the business has been open for 30 years, but people are finding it for the first time because of the artwork, and it's becoming a new landmark in Dixieland.

Cory Petcoff, President of Baron Realty, was prompted to join the Art Infusion program when he heard the CRA would contribute to the cost of an exterior paint job in exchange for providing a wall for a mural. "I had the opportunity to view samples from several artists, select my favorite, and work collaboratively with that artist to find an image that worked well on the building."

That artist, Charly Malpass, jumped at the opportunity when she saw the call to artists. After doing some research, she came up with the idea of reflecting swans, playing on the name of Lake Mirror. She appreciated that Petcoff was open to her ideas, and everyone involved was helpful. "I even met another muralist from Lakeland, and we want to collaborate sometime."



2021 GOALS & ACTIONS

Adopted in 2001, the Dixieland Redevelopment Plan outlined the goals below. All goals have either been accomplished or developed to promote and identify implementation opportunities.

2021 GOALS



REDEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Establish and administer financial mechanisms necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan.



REDEVELOPMENT POLICY

Prevent future occurrences of slum and blight. Encourage reuse of properties that no longer function at their highest potential economic use.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Work closely with area businesses, merchants' associations, and the Chamber of Commerce to address the needs of existing businesses through the redevelopment process.

Make the redevelopment area competitive with major activity centers in the region.



PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

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.

Create a safe, secure, appealing, and efficient pedestrian system linking all major activity centers, parking facilities, alleyways, and other interchange points.



LAND USE

Develop land uses and patterns that create and strengthen activity centers.

Promote and locate strategic land use activities within the Dixieland Redevelopment Area that will support tourist and commercial attraction to historic downtown.



HOUSING

Encourage private efforts toward building housing in the Redevelopment Area and adjacent neighborhoods.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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.

pop it out & frame it

2021 GRANTS & PROJECTS



IN PROGRESS

COMPLETED









join us

CRA ADVISORY BOARD

1st Thursday @ 3pm | City Commission Conference Room

CITY COMMISSION

1st & 3rd Mondays @ 3pm | City Commission Chambers

photo credit

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