

4.2 ORGANIZATION, ADMINISTRATION, & REDEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Project OAR-1: Provide Additional Support for the Englewood CRA Program

Project Background: This project replaces Project #1 in the October 2005 CRA Project List. The Sarasota County Planning Services staff, with the guidance of the Englewood CRA Advisory Board, was originally responsible for creating the Redevelopment Plan and initiating the revitalization effort. Upon adoption of the Redevelopment Plan by the Sarasota County Community Redevelopment Agency, however, planning staff directed their efforts towards other planning assignments. Therefore, a CRA Program Coordinator was established to execute the Redevelopment Plan projects and programs. Because of limitations of CRA funds during the initial years and the county's goal of not adding any additional staff positions paid by the general revenue funds, the Program Coordinator position was part-time the first two years. The CRA office was established in 1999 and the Program Coordinator position became full-time in 2002.

Project Description: A CRA Program Coordinator is a full-time position, employed by the county. Currently, the CRA Coordinator is assisted by a full-time administrative assistant. As the number and diversity of projects have grown, so have the responsibilities and demands on the CRA's limited staff. This project recognizes the need to expand administrative resources of the CRA to effectively manage and carry out the projects over the remaining timeframe of the CRA. This project also recommends that the CRA office relocate to the downtown area to be closer to the majority of projects and programs planned in the next few years, as well as existing and prospective businesses and investors.

Project Objectives:

- To coordinate, guide, and facilitate the implementation of the Redevelopment Plan.
- To act as a liaison between the Community Redevelopment Agency, developers, community groups, and local citizens.
- To provide adequate staffing to carry out the large number of projects and programs with specific expertise in real estate development, economic development, housing, business recruitment, and downtown marketing.
- To motivate people to invest in the redevelopment area through development activity, property improvements, incentive programs, volunteer assistance, and overall community participation.
- To be centrally located and easily accessible to local businesses and residents, as well as prospective businesses and investors.

Action Steps Required for Implementation:

A. Continue to Fund CRA Coordinator, Administrative Assistant Position, and Office Expenses

The CRA Program Coordinator is responsible for coordinating and implementing the overall redevelopment effort. This includes, at a minimum, securing funds for projects and programs identified in the Redevelopment Plan, developing a marketing plan, acting as a liaison between the Community Redevelopment Agency, developers, and the general public, implementing projects and programs identified in the Redevelopment Plan, and responding to inquiries and expressions of interest in the redevelopment area. The Program Coordinator must also have strong people skills, be able to communicate effectively in both written form and oral presentations, have knowledge of financing, planning, and development, and be able to motivate others. The Program Coordinator Position should also be raised to a management position within the County and report to the Planning Services Executive Director or Planning Director. The Administrative Assistant is responsible for assisting the Coordinator with program and project implementation, public communications, and office administration.

The salary of the Program Coordinator and Administrative Assistant and related office expenses should continue to be paid by the CRA using Tax Increment Financing (TIF) revenues. These two positions should also continue to be part of the overall county structure. These positions and related expenses should be annually funded over the remaining core of the CRA District or until all projects and programs are effectively carried out (up to 13 years).

Projected Costs: To be determined in the annual budget cycle

Project Participants and Administration: County and CRA Staff, BCC, and CRAAB

Time Frame: Immediately and continuously over the duration of the CRA or until projects and programs are effectively carried out

B. Create a New Position of Redevelopment Specialist

In order to facilitate and expedite specific CRA redevelopment projects and programs, a new position of Redevelopment Specialist should be created. Under supervision and cooperation with the Program Coordinator, this position coordinates, plans, and directs specific redevelopment projects approved by the CRA Advisory Board, such as public infrastructure projects, community initiated developments (see CID below), and public-private partnerships with investors for redevelopment projects. A description of responsibilities follows:

- Perform strategic work and general management in the areas of redevelopment including waterfront and streetscape improvements, public infrastructure projects, redevelopment of targeted private properties, and recruitment and expansion of local business and industry;
- Initiate programs and activities that facilitate redevelopment, implementation and funding of redevelopment projects;
- Monitor and coordinate interdepartmental project contracts for services, construction, and scheduling;
- Report and present to Program Coordinator, the CRA Advisory Board, public agencies, and the general public;
- Interface with support and funding groups;
- Work with the Program Coordinator and CRA Advisory Board to plan and implement new economic and community development projects;
- Have specific knowledge of and experience with economic and community development processes;
- Have public speaking experience and strong interpersonal skills;
- Work with government officials, not-for-profits, developers, and retail businesses;
- Develop and implement programs to expand investment in the CRA District;
- Understand private and public finance and the ability to analyze financial statements and assist with business plan development; and
- Write grants and be familiar with the various funding programs available through state and federal agencies.

Actions: Fund, advertise, and fill position. This could also be a contracted position for a certain number of hours per week for a specific amount of time

Project Participants and Administration: County and CRA Staff

Projected Costs: \$60,000 annually over the next 5 years

Time Frame: Full-time position over the next 5 years

C. Maintain a Continuing Services Contract with a Multi-disciplined Firm to Assist in Carrying out CRA Projects and Programs

The CRA secured a continuing services agreement and work assignment with an engineering firm in 2006. Currently there are several county and CRA projects under way or being planned, such as new sidewalks, additional public parking, stormwater improvements, and possible utility relocation. The primary purpose of this contract is to provide oversight on redevelopment projects that are planned or under way, and to assure that the infrastructure improvements planned for the community are carried out in a coordinated manner.

The continuing services agreement and work assignments should be continued and expanded using a multidiscipline planning, landscape architecture, and engineering firm to provide oversight and coordination on projects that are designed and in progress, and to assist the CRA in planning and designing future projects such as public parking, relocation of utilities, streetscape improvements, wayfinding and gateway signs, regulation revisions, waterfront parks, and other community-initiated developments.

Project Participants and Administration: CRA Coordinator, consulting firm(s) (design, construction management, coordination), and County Department project managers, depending on the project

Projected Costs: To be determined in the annual budget cycle

Time Frame: Immediately and continuously over the duration of the CRA or until projects and programs are effectively carried out

D. Assist with Partial Matching Funds for a Main Street Program Director

During the visioning sessions it was determined that there is a strong need for downtown business support and marketing services. However, this is a time-consuming process and typically beyond the primary responsibilities of the CRA Program Coordinator, whose focus is to carry out the redevelopment projects and programs. The designation of downtown Englewood as a “Main Street” community, together with a new position of Main Street Manager, would fill this gap in services. The Main Street Program is a successful nationwide downtown revitalization program established through the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It includes a four-point program generally involving organizational, promotional, economic development, and design activities. There are currently over 50 Main Street communities throughout the state, including Sarasota County.

The overall objective of a Main Street Manager is to support downtown marketing, promotion, business development, festivals and events coordination, and fundraising. These activities are essential to the revitalization effort already under way, and parallel with the future redevelopment initiatives of the CRA District.

A new position of Main Street Manager should be created to forward and expand the revitalization effort. This new position should be an independent contractor and not a new county staff position. The Manager would work directly with downtown business owners, property owners, and organizations (such as OEVA and the Chamber of Commerce) and be a liaison with the CRA and other county government officials and staff. The general responsibilities of the Main Street Program Manager would be as follows:

- Participate in special events planning and promotion;
- Organize fund raising activities;
- Coordinate community participation and volunteer activities for downtown revitalization initiatives;
- Work with existing businesses, as well as assisting development of new businesses;
- Work with a diverse group of volunteers, businesses, and citizen/government partnerships to coordinate project activities;
- Promote and assist commercial revitalization and economic development efforts;
- Coordinate and implement local revitalization strategies, promotional activities, web site enhancement and maintenance, economic development opportunities, and business recruitment;
- Write grant submissions;
- Promote the organization to area merchants, professionals, and civic and community organizations; and
- Communicate and create positive relationships with the public, downtown merchants, property owners, governing bodies, and local organizations.

Project Participants and Administration: CRA, OEVA, Chamber of Commerce, downtown business and property owners, Florida Main Street Program

Projected Costs:

- Application fee and preparation costs for Florida Main Street Program
- \$30,000 seed money from CRA over 3-year period with matching funds from other parties
- Additional seed money from application to Florida Main Street Program

Time Frame: CRA funding commitment for 3 years to be self-sufficient thereafter

E. Relocate the CRA Office to Downtown Area

The CRA office was originally located on the 300 block of Dearborn Street then moved to 2 Old Englewood Road (the historic Quimby-Jergens-Rinkard House). The CRA office was relocated again in October 2006 to 693 Old Englewood Road, which is outside the downtown area.

This project proposes to relocate the CRA office to the downtown area where the majority of existing and future redevelopment projects and programs are scheduled to occur over the next several years. The objective of this relocation would be to better support existing downtown businesses, marketing efforts, and redevelopment projects, and to provide convenient access to prospective new businesses and inventors. One of the new county-owned waterfront properties at Harbor Lane, Cherokee Street, or West Perry Street would be the most suitable and cost-effective location. Rezones of these properties are needed in order for the CRA office to be relocated to one of these sites.

Project Participants and Administration: CRA and county

Projected Costs: \$5,000 estimated for moving expenses, utilities, signage, stationary, etc.

Time Frame: Within the next 2 years

Project OAR-2: Establish Joint Partnership Board to Initiate and Facilitate Projects and Programs

Project Background and Description: For the CRA District to reach its full economic potential, there must be a permanent vehicle that allows the community's key constituents to fully visualize, plan, and implement the redevelopment program. Given the workload currently placed on the CRA Coordinator and county planning department, the district does not have the staffing capacity to carry out a number of the redevelopment projects and programs in a timely manner. However, the Sarasota County Economic Development Corporation, Englewood Area Chamber of Commerce, and various county departments are involved in broader economic development and community planning issues. The Olde Englewood Village Association (OEVA) is an excellent foundation for revitalization for the downtown area of the CRA District. Each of these groups and others must play an integral role in the CRA organization and work cooperatively for the benefit of the community. A "CRA Joint Partnership" can serve as this coordinating body and provide coordinated and sustainable support to the district in the form of promotion, business and economic development, event planning, maintenance, and capital projects.

Project Objectives: Establish a joint board of key stakeholders to create a formal public-private relationship in carrying out strategic short-term and long-term redevelopment programs and projects. The primary objective would be to coordinate marketing, promotional, and recruitment programs. Key stakeholders should include representatives from the county, EDC, CRA, OEVA, chamber, local institutions and associations, property owners, and business owners.

The Englewood CRA Joint Partnership should be committed to enhancing the economic climate of the CRA District and serving as a partner to all public and private groups working for positive change by promoting and facilitating an attractive environment for redevelopment. The partnership board's primary functions would be as follows:

- Develop partnerships with local businesses and other organizations for the retention and recruitment of businesses that will sustain a positive economic climate;

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- Promote and support efforts of existing and new businesses in the CRA District through marketing assistance;
 - Identify and offer financial incentives needed to encourage current property owners and prospective inventors to expand, enhance, and redevelop key properties in the district;
 - Develop assistance programs for neighborhood enhancements and community initiated development; and
 - Communicate regularly with the business community, revitalization partners, residents, and the general public.

Action Steps Required for Implementation: To spur the process of redevelopment, key stakeholders should form this voluntary board to carry out some of the short-term strategies. Every effort should be made to structure the board as a private-public partnership and as a group of powerful, influential leaders. For ease of management, the board's size should be kept to a limited number of members (such as 12 to 20). Each representative should be a voting member of the board. The board should include the following composition and representation:

- CRA Coordinator
- CRA Advisory Board Chairman
- Board of County Commissioners (CRA Advisory Board) Representative
- EDC Representative
- OEVA President
- Sarasota County Planning Services Director
- Englewood Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director
- Art Alliance of Lemon Bay Representative
- Neighborhood Association Representatives
- Industry and Association Representatives (hospital, banks, key local industries, downtown business owners/operators, historical society, Lemon Bay League, library, etc.)
- Newspaper/Media CEO

Project Participants and Administration: CRA Coordinator, EDC, Chamber of Commerce, County Departments, BCC, CRAAB, and other local institutions and resource organizations

Projected Costs: To be determined in the annual budget cycle

Time Frame: Immediately and continuously over the duration of the CRA or until projects and programs are effectively carried out.