



**WAUCHULA COMMUNITY  
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

**Annual Report**

**FY 2022 - 2023**

# BACKGROUND

The Wauchula Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was established in 1997 under Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes, which authorizes municipalities to create a community redevelopment agency after finding that there were existing areas of slum and blight within the municipality.

Like other rural communities in the area, Wauchula has, and continues to face challenges including stagnant population growth, decline in employment in many primary industries, fewer development opportunities, extreme weather events, and uncertainty associated with primary economic anchors. Historically, the City has been known for its agriculture (primarily cucumbers and citrus) and phosphate mining industries, cattle ranches, and affordable seasonal housing for retirees. (KHA Redevelopment Plan Update 2019)

The initial CRA area included 1,536 acres, covering over 2.4 sq miles of the City of Wauchula. Upon adoption in 1997, the CRA was established for 25 years. In 2010, the CRA conducted another Finding of Necessity and determined that an additional 16 parcels within the city boundaries met the qualifications necessary to be included within the CRA. This brought the CRA boundaries to 1,579.6 acres or 79% of the city at the time. This Finding of Necessity also found value in extending the life of the CRA an additional five years, to the 30-year maximum allowed by statute. A new sunset date was adopted in 2010 as 2027. In 2019, upon meeting the criteria outlined in the statute, the life of the CRA was extended again another 30 years. The CRA will sunset in 2057.

The CRA Board is comprised of the five commissioners elected to office to serve the City of Wauchula. Their terms as board members will follow their terms of office.



**DISTRICT 1**  
Mayor Pro Tem  
Neda Cobb



**DISTRICT 2**  
Russell Graylin Smith



**DISTRICT 3**  
Mayor  
Keith Nadaskay



**DISTRICT 4**  
Sherri Albritton



**DISTRICT 5**  
Gary Smith

## CRA RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES

**Resolution 97-09** - the City of Wauchula (City) determined and declared there existed a need for a community redevelopment agency to function in the City to carry out redevelopment purposes pursuant to the Act

**Resolution 97-10** - the Commission declared itself the CRA in the City

**Ordinance 97-834** - the Commission readopted and reaffirmed Resolutions 97-09 and 97-10, and established a Redevelopment Trust Fund pursuant to Section 163.387 of the Act

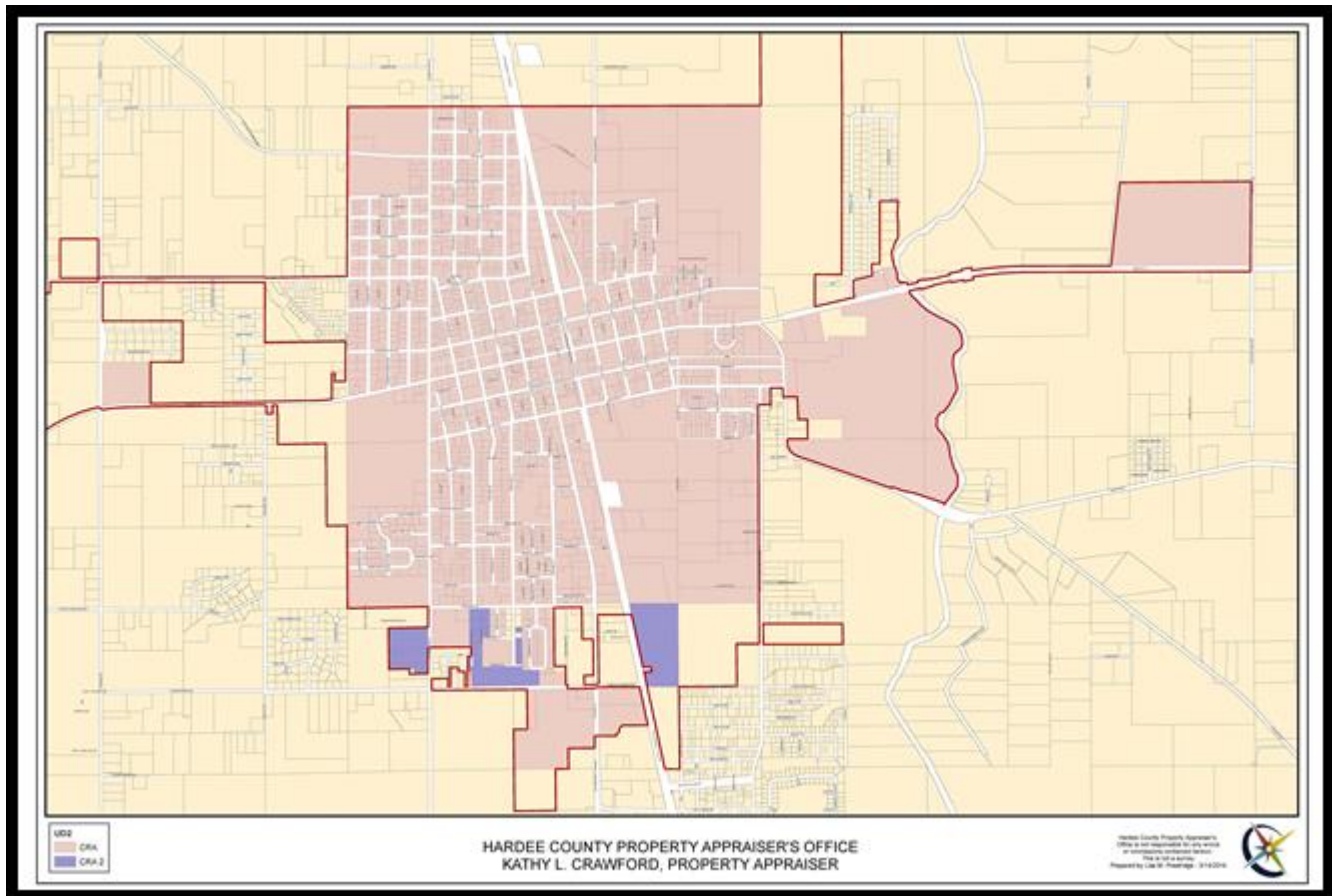
**Resolution 2009-25** - the CRA and Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. ("KHA"), entered into an agreement through which KHA provided an evaluation and comprehensive update to the Community Redevelopment Plan (the "Plan") emphasizing programmatic and project-specific implementation consistent with the CRA boundary

**Resolution 2010-24** – on August 9, 2010, the City modified the community redevelopment plan following presentation of the Plan Update 2010 to the City of Wauchula Planning and Zoning Board (the "P&Z") on June 21, 2010 and a public hearing by the CRA on July 12, 2010

**Resolution 2011-01** – the CRA expanded the boundaries of the area and extended the timeframe to provide redevelopment activities within the CRA boundaries after supporting data and analysis found the existence of conditions that warranted these updates

**Resolution 2019-10** – on September 16, 2019, the CRA adopted Plan Update 2019 following a public hearing held on September 9, 2019 with amendments focused on: 1. Updated capital improvements plan (CIP) and related tax increment (TIF) projections, 2. Neighborhood impact, including affordable and workforce housing, 3. Downtown parking study, 4. Parks and recreation facilities, 5. Extension of the CRA term date from 2027 to 2057

## REDEVELOPMENT AREA



The Wauchula Community Redevelopment Area currently consists of 1,685 parcels within the limits of the City of Wauchula.

(219 of those parcels do not generate property tax)

## FUNDING SOURCE

The CRA Trust Fund is funded through tax increment financing (TIF). TIF revenue is a unique tool used by cities and counties for the purpose of redevelopment activities. The goal of this tool is to leverage public funds to promote private sector activity within the redevelopment area.

TIF collected by the CRA is equivalent to 95% of the value of property taxes collected for that year, minus the base year.

YEAR	REAL VALUE	CITY TIF	HC TIFF	TOTAL TIF
1997	49,606,576.00	BASE YEAR	BASE YEAR	0.00
1998	49,697,530.00	433.00	756.00	1,189.00
1999	53,463,866.83	18,395.00	32,064.00	50,459.00
2000	54,358,701.00	22,429.00	39,095.00	61,524.00
2001	56,775,965.00	33,957.00	57,498.00	91,455.00
2002	58,610,200.00	42,383.00	71,764.00	114,147.00
2003	62,965,725.00	60,488.00	97,619.00	158,107.00
2004	66,750,022.00	71,457.00	123,939.00	195,396.00
2005	66,311,246.00	64,911.00	118,503.00	183,414.00
2006	87,855,237.00	163,290.00	292,751.00	456,041.00
2007	105,030,345.00	231,018.00	364,750.00	595,768.00
2008	107,884,517.00	251,523.00	395,356.00	646,879.00
2009	107,225,708.00	248,117.00	390,002.00	638,119.00
2010	98,430,945.00	202,649.00	318,533.00	521,182.00
2011	90,623,689.00	172,260.00	260,868.00	433,128.00
2012	95,001,510.00	178,072.00	269,699.00	447,771.00
2013	85,794,162.00	168,029.00	254,460.00	422,489.00
2014	85,921,642.00	168,905.00	266,106.00	435,011.00
2015	88,352,787.00	181,501.00	285,952.00	467,453.00
2016	93,823,536.00	210,798.00	332,109.00	542,907.00
2017	98,850,941.00	237,776.00	374,611.00	612,387.00
2018	101,788,080.00	252,949.00	399,442.00	652,391.00
2019	107,059,323.00	281,169.00	448,542.00	729,711.00
2020	113,370,109.00	310,361.00	492,032.00	802,393.00
2021	119,512,654.00	342,766.00	543,172.00	885,938.00
2022	133,790,867.00	418,091.00	662,538.00	1,080,629.00
2023	147,723,042.00	460,696.00	779,010.00	1,239,706.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,296,385,944.83</b>	<b>4,794,423.00</b>	<b>7,671,171.00</b>	<b>12,465,594.00</b>

# MASTER REDEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE 2019 GOALS



2019 Wauchula CRA – Community Redevelopment Plan September 2019

## IV. CRA GOALS

The 2019 Plan has broad-based CRA Goals, identified below, which serve as a guide for capital improvements and programming of projects in the following chapters of this Plan. The goals touch upon a variety of topics and aspects of the City, including land use, economic development, and transportation and mobility. These categories are an encompassing approach to all aspects of duties and responsibilities of the CRA, from actual physical improvements to marketing and support services for businesses in the CRA.

### Land Use

- Adaptive reuse and redevelopment of buildings
- Identify and support partnerships with private properties with emphasis on historic building renovations
- Use infrastructure investments to leverage, focus, and shape the location and intensity of development
- Continue brownfield clean up and redevelopment
- Provide incentives to provide for both single-family and multi-family housing, as well as affordable and workforce housing, as needed
- Focus on infill housing developments and develop assistance/partner on programs for home ownership

### Economic Development

- Cooperation and continued partnership with Main Street Wauchula Inc. to promote economic development and to raise awareness of businesses in the CRA boundaries
- Keep open potential for bonding of improvements in the future
- Establish a prioritization of grant projects and assistance including ROI (TIF revenue thresholds)
- Continue to identify additional non CRA funding options including but not limited to grants and private funding

### Transportation & Mobility

- Improved traffic flow
- Monitor parking in the downtown and evaluate the need for additional parking (should the need arise)
- Explore opportunities for multimodal services, as needed
- Safer travel ways for pedestrian and bicyclists, including development of more sidewalks and general roadway improvements
- Reduced heavy vehicle impacts
- Increased traffic safety

### Cultural & Recreational Resources

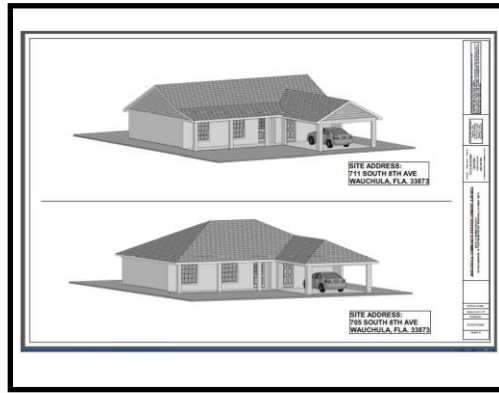
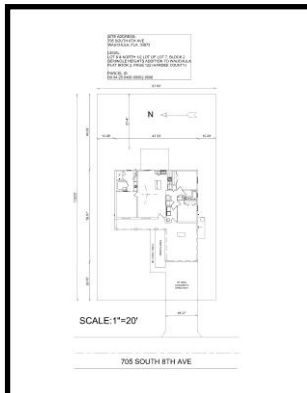
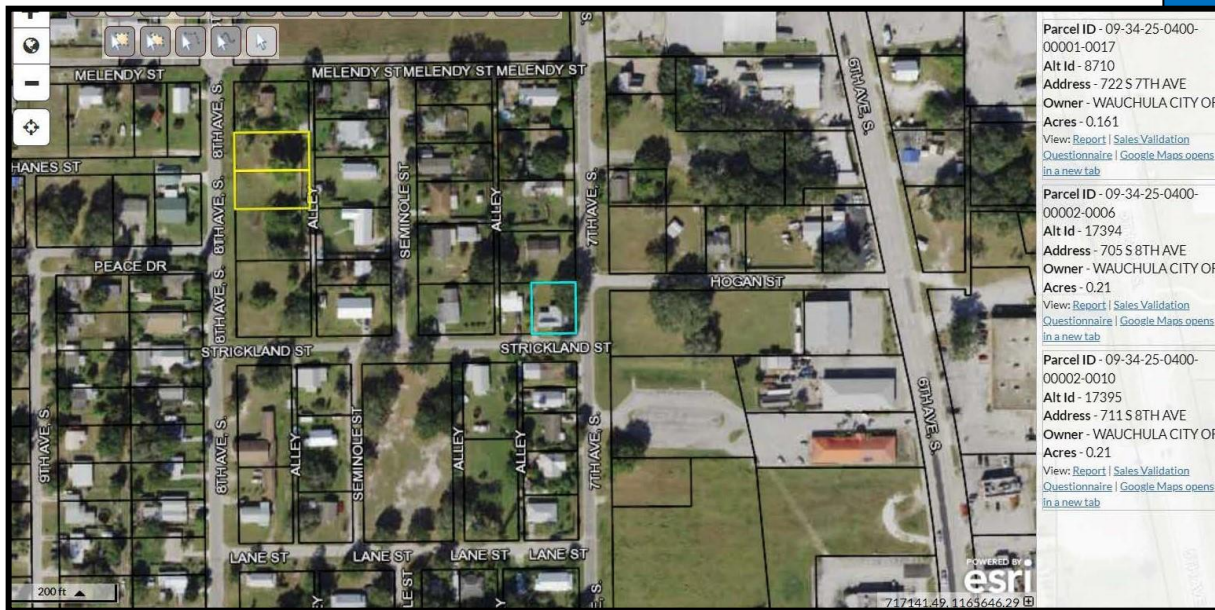
- Unify the community through activities in City parks including fitness activities, music, and movies
- Redevelop Crews Park and begin construction of Peace River Park
- Identify new park opportunities including those at the neighborhood level
- Follow and implement park redevelopment per parks master plan where economically feasible
- Work with local partners to bring cultural activities to historic City auditorium



## 2022 -2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROJECT UPDATES

### IN-FILL HOUSING – ONGOING

In May of 2022, the City of Wauchula deeded 3 parcels to the CRA to be included in their in-fill housing program. Construction on the 3 homes began in May of 2023 and are targeted for completion in October.



Continued work to provide affordable housing in the CRA area aligns with F.S. 163 Part III and is specifically addressed in the CRA Master Plan Update 2019 under Land Use:

- Provide incentives to provide for both single-family and multi-family housing, as well as affordable and workforce housing, as needed
- Focus on infill housing developments and develop assistance/partner on programs for home ownership

## **PARKS AT PEACE RIVER – ONGOING**

The Parks at Peace River Project continues to be a focus for the CRA. This public improvement, five-phased project, is covered under the CRA Master Plan Update 2019 under Cultural and Recreational Resources:

- Unify the community through activities in City parks including fitness activities, music, and movies
- Redevelop Crews Park and begin construction of Peace River Park
- Follow and implement park redevelopment per Parks Master Plan where economically feasible

### **➤ PARKS AT PEACE RIVER PHASE II - ONGOING**

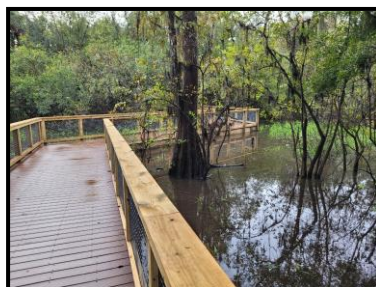
Construction of the Crews Park Pavillion began in 2021 and is ongoing. The pavilion is Phase II of the five-phase Parks at Peace River Project includes the construction of the main pavilion. The pavilion will include restrooms, a deck area for picnicking, a kiosk for a potential vendor, and a storage area for kayaks and canoes.

The project came to a standstill in 2022 when the contractor had to be let go. A new contractor was hired and construction began again in July of 2023. The project is scheduled for completion in April of 2024.



### **➤ PARKS AT PEACE RIVER PHASE IV - V – COMPLETE**

These two phases of the parks project include additional primitive campsites complete with fire pit rings and picnic tables, new and refurbished hiking trails, signs, a kayak launch, a river overlook, and 40' watch tower, and parking. Most of these items were covered by two State grants: Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program and a Recreation and Trails Grant. Phase IV was completed in June of 2023 and Phase V was completed in September of 2023.





## LANDSCAPE & LAWN CARE – ONGOING



According to FDOT, an estimated 46,000 vehicles are traveling Hwy 17 North and South daily and another estimated 5,000 traveling through downtown Wauchula. It is for this reason, as well as the pride of our residents, that the CRA continues to place a high priority on beautification.

## BROWNFIELD - ONGOING

This past fiscal year has been spent coordinating with FDEP to establish a closure with conditions for the site. This process involves not only the City-owned parking/right of way but also small portions of two adjacent properties. Survey work

The CRA continues to help offset the cost of monitoring and remediation with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Voluntary Clean-Up Tax Credit Program. This program allows the CRA to claim 50% of the cost incurred during the year, for remediation of a brownfield site, in tax credits which are then sold on the open market.

Brownfield Clean-up helps eliminate slum and blight and is addressed in the CRA Master Plan Update 2019 under Land Use:

- Continue brownfield clean-up and redevelopment

## HISTORIC AUDITORIUM RENOVATIONS - ONGOING

The Wauchula CRA has focused on revitalizing the city's historic city hall since it was listed as a catalyst project in the 2010 Master Plan. In the Master Plan Update 2019, the focus remained a goal under Cultural & Recreational Resources: Work with local partners to bring cultural activities to the historic City Auditorium.

The CRA was awarded a Mosaic Grant in 2022 to upgrade the audio-visual system. This contract



was awarded to AE Global in June of 2023. The equipment being purchased and installed includes speakers, lighting, projectors, mics, soundboard, and various other pieces needed to enhance performances and presentation as well as attract visiting productions or performers.

In addition to upgrading the audio-visual system, other enhancements include repairing the historic windows, repairing/installing a new ceiling, and addressing ADA accessibility issues to the stage and backstage areas. These items will be funded by the Historic Preservation Grant awarded in July 2022. Before selecting a contractor, the grant requires the State's approval of architectural drawings for the work being completed. The work must follow the Secretary of Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation for historic structures. An architect was selected in May of 2023. Together with CRA staff, Hardee County Players, Hardee County Building Department, and Fire, the architect has worked on a design that will be the most functional in use and design.



Auditorium renovations comply with several Master Redevelopment Plan goals:

- Cultural & Recreational Resources:
  - Work with local partners to bring cultural activities to the Historic City Auditorium
- Land Use:
  - Identify and support partnerships with private properties with an emphasis on historic building renovations
- Economic Development:
  - Continue to identify additional non-CRA funding options including but not limited to grants and private funding



## FARR FIELD - ONGOING

The City of Wauchula did not receive approval for the State of Florida appropriation request for this project in 2023. Another request will be submitted in 2024. During this time, the CRA will research other potential funding or grant options to help move this project forward.

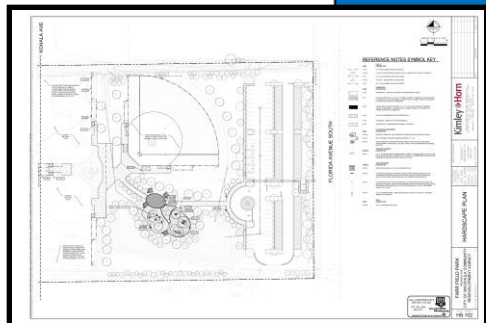
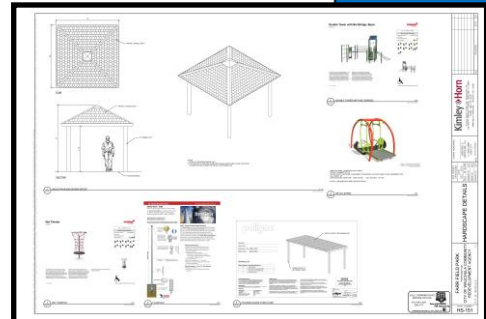


This project results from a Parks Master Plan adopted as part of the Master Plan Update 2019. With public input, the plan evaluated five parks owned by the City of Wauchula and looked at potential opportunities to ensure that city residents had access to various outdoor recreation activities.

Park renovations comply with the Master Redevelopment Plan goals under Cultural & Recreational Resources:

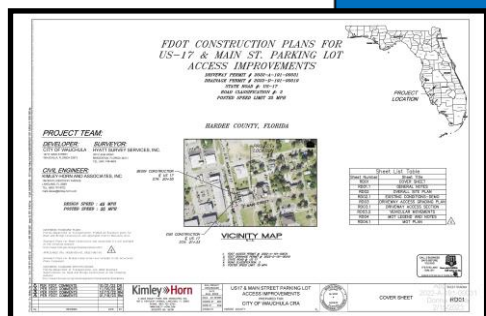
- Unify the community through activities in City parks including fitness activities, music, and movies
- Identify new park opportunities including those at the neighborhood level
- Follow and implement park redevelopment per Parks Master Plan where economically feasible

Farr Field will provide residents in the southwest quadrant of the city, with closer access to a playground that features a wheelchair-accessible swing as well as other play equipment. In addition, a third softball field will allow for the park to be utilized for tournaments, bringing visitors to the city. A key feature of the park will be the splash pad. Currently, Hardee County residents only have access to the public pool, several miles from the downtown, only open to the public during summer months. This splash pad will provide a cool and refreshing option for residents who do not have access to the pool or may not know how to swim. A parking area and picnic sites will round out the park's features, making it a true asset to the community.



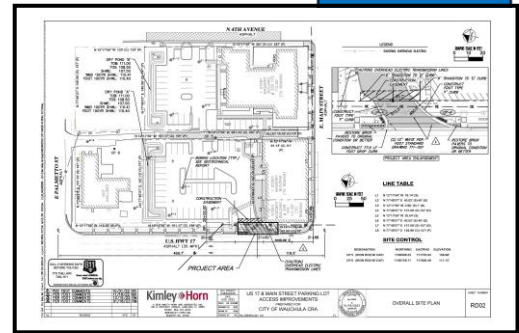
## HWY 17 PARKING LOT - ONGOING

In 2021 the City of Wauchula entered into an agreement with the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) by which the IDA would convey to the City, property they owned along Hwy 17 N, just north of Main Street. In exchange, the CRA would construct a parking lot on the property, to be used primarily for public parking, but reserving 1/3 of the spaces for IDA use. In addition, the City and IDA would partner together to submit a grant application to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity for a Job Creation grant to fund the construction, based on the jobs created by R. Riveter. The grant application was submitted and awarded in 2021.



Due to funding constraints, the project was not bid out for construction until 2023. The contractor broke ground in September. The project will bring 66 new spaces to the downtown complete with landscaping and lighting.

The Hwy 17 Parking Lot Project falls in line with the CRA Master Plan Update 2019 under the Transportation & Mobility goal: Monitor parking in the downtown and evaluate the need for additional parking.



## MAIN STREET WAUCHULA, INC

The CRA Redevelopment Plan Update 2019 lists “Cooperation and continued partnership with Main Street Wauchula, Inc. to promote economic development and to raise awareness of businesses in the CRA boundaries” as a goal to further economic development. This relationship has proven successful for the CRA in part because the organization's goals align.

Main Street Wauchula, Inc. maintains both a Main Street America accreditation as well as a Florida Main Street designation. With the collaboration of many volunteers, the downtown business owners, and local government, Main Street Wauchula, Inc. strives to bring about economic development by preserving the very core of our community.



Highlights for the year include but are not limited to:

- Ranked 6 out of 67 grant submittals for a Historic Preservation Small Matching Grant for the Hardee County Trust Building
- Logged 966 volunteer hours through a variety of activities that promoted downtown businesses, brought the community together in downtown, beautified the downtown, created memories, and shared our history
- Hosted three traditional events the brought thousands to the downtown: Wildcat Tailgate Party, Fall Festival, Hometown Christmas
- Hosted four in-store promotional events that not only brought people downtown but put them directly in businesses: Selfie Week, two Hometown Happy Hour events, Shop Small Saturday
- Continued to promote our history with the Annual Historic Ghost Tour
- Saw in increase in local performers and attendees at Open Mic
- Grew more young local entrepreneurs with 35 vendors at the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Business Fair





FINANCIAL REPORT  
FY 2022 – 2023

CITY OF WAUCHULA  
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

<b>ASSETS</b>	
CLAIM ON POOLED CASH	\$1,492,749.35
DUE FROM HOUSING GRANTS	\$20,000.00
DUE FROM VENDORS	\$134.02
DUE FROM GRANTS	\$98,432.61
	<b>\$1,611,315.98</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
AP POOLED	(\$339,065.96)
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE-SYSTEM	(\$56,639.35)
DEFERRED REVENUE	(\$22,705.00)
WAGES PAYABLE-PAYROLL A/C	(\$916.46)
RETAINAGE PAYABLE	(\$6,167.04)
	<b>(\$425,493.81)</b>
<b>FUND BALANCE</b>	
BUDGET FUND BAL. - SYSTEM	(\$542,847.15)
ENCUMBRANCES CONTROL	\$25,362.02
RESERVE FOR ENCUMBRANCES	(\$25,362.02)
FUND BALANCE	(\$1,645,669.77)
	<b>(\$2,188,516.92)</b>
<b>REVENUES</b>	
DEO GRANT- AUDITORIUM PARKING	\$42,155.80
FRDAP GRANT- CREWS PARK	\$43,775.25
IDA GRANT- AUDITORIUM PARKING	\$42,155.81
EDA GRANT- PEACE RIVER PARK	\$416,639.96
INTEREST -- CRA MM	\$43,018.14
RENTS & ROYALTIES	(\$1,200.00)
SALE OF VCTC	\$35,332.57
Cont. Hardee Co. TIF	\$662,538.00
INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT	\$349.75
TIF TRANSFER FROM GEN FUND	\$418,091.00
	<b>\$1,702,856.28</b>

<b>EXPENSES</b>	
EXECUTIVE SALARIES	\$63,453.32
FICA	\$754.70
RETIREMENT	\$2,394.44
HEALTH INSURANCE	\$22,466.65
WELLNESS PROGRAM	\$707.30
WORKERS COMP	\$211.88
AD & D POLICY	\$33.37
PROF SERVICES - GENERAL	\$12,626.88
ACCOUNTING & AUDITING	\$14,193.70
CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	\$58,219.25
BROWNFIELD CLEANUP	\$187,062.43
TRAVEL & PER DIEM	\$1,301.93
COMMUNICATIONS - TELEPHONE	\$962.50
RENTALS & LEASES	\$12,000.00
INSURANCE	\$1,001.34
PRINTING & BINDING	\$2,141.81
CRA OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$407.49
OPERATING SUP & EXP	\$6,424.63
BOOKS, PUB & ED	\$1,315.00
BUILDINGS- AUDITORIUM	\$287,550.88
IN-FILL HOUSING	\$461,925.33
AUDITORIUM PARKING LOT	\$84,311.61
FARR FIELD	\$5,535.00
CREWS PARK	\$12,838.69
PEACE RIVER PARK	\$1,329,214.22
EDA- PARKS AT PEACE RIVER	\$101,496.68
CONTRIBUTIONS-MAIN ST PRO	\$35,000.00
	<b>\$2,705,551.03</b>

The CRA Fund is audited annually and included in the city's financial statements as a special revenue fund. At the time of this report, the FY 22-23 report was not complete. The FY 21-22 report can be found at <https://www.cityofwauchula.gov>.



**WAUCHULA COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

**107 E. MAIN STREET**

**WAUCHULA, FL 33873**

**(863) 767-0330**