



**COMMUNITY
REDEVELOPMENT
AGENCY**

**Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020**

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 criteria set forth 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- Neda Cobb

District 2- Russell Graylin Smith

District 3- Mayor Keith Nadaskay

District 4- Sherri Albritton

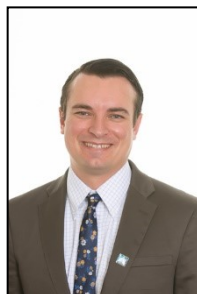
District 5- Gary Smith



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

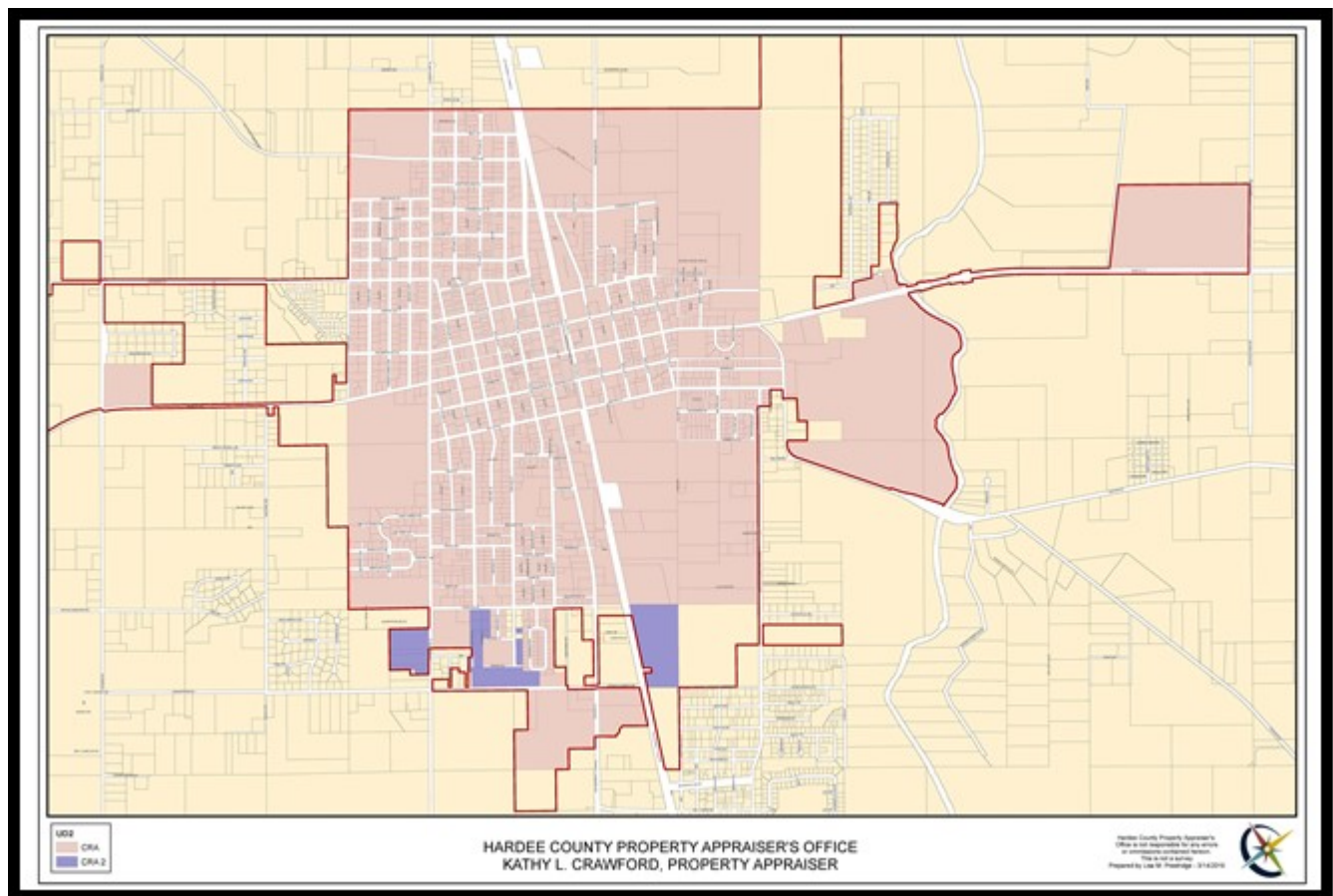
Resolution 2009-25 - the CRA and Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. ("KHA"), entered into an agreement through which KHA provided an evaluation and comprehensive update to the Community Redevelopment Plan (the "Plan") emphasizing programmatic and project-specific implementation consistent with the CRA 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 1,692 parcels within the limits of the City of Wauchula.

(214 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	434.00	756.00	1,190.00
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
TOTAL	1,296,385,944.83	3,262,510.00	5,194,419.00	8,456,929.00

OTHER FUNDING SOURCES FY 19-20

GRANTS

\$200,000	Recreation & Trails Program – AWARDED
\$200,000	Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program - AWARDED
\$668,598	Economic Development Authority - AWARDED
\$104,250	Florida Division of Historic Resources, Special Category Grant - APPLIED
\$153,000	Florida Division of Cultural Affairs, Cultural Facilities Grant - APPLIED
\$15,922.70	Voluntary Clean-Up Tax Credit 2019 – CERTIFICATE PENDING
\$51,500	Private Contribution for Farr Field - RECIEVED



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

2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROJECT UPDATES

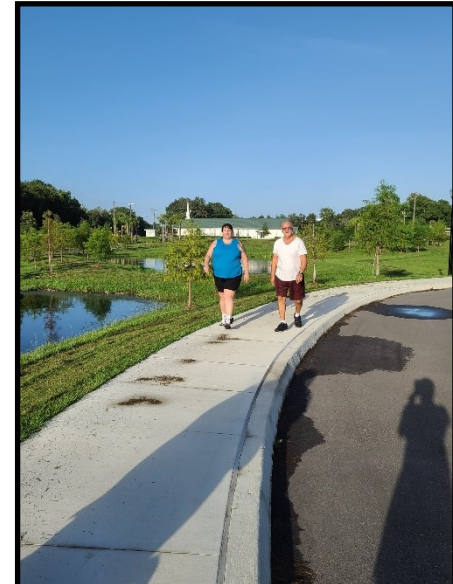
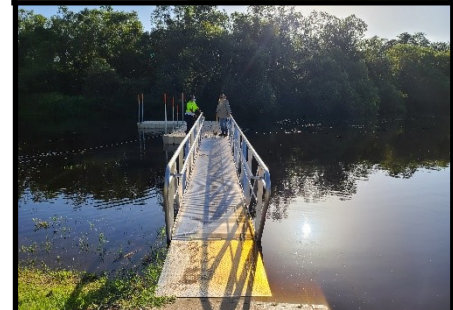
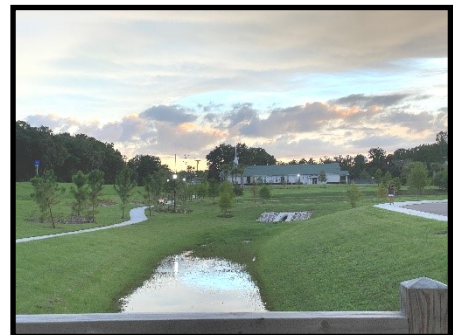
PHASE I OF THE PARKS AT PEACE RIVER PROJECT - COMPLETED

In 2015, the CRA began exploring the idea that public amenities can improve a community's economy by making it a more desirable place to live, creating less need for residents to drive out of town for fun, and welcoming visitors. The board was already on the path to creating a sense of "place", or a destination of Wauchula with the wayfinding signs installed in 2014. Parks at Peace River is another step in that process.

What started with a focus group to discuss enhancements to Crews Park turned into a more complex and yet more complete and well-rounded plan. From this focus group came the five phase Parks at Peace River Project. In 2020, Phase I was complete.

This phase, from design and permitting through construction, totaled \$1,075,490. The CRA applied for and received two grants from Mosaic Co. totaling \$165,000 and a Recreation and Trails Program Grant totaling \$143,247. Key elements in Phase I included:

- Boat Ramp
- Walking Path
- Parking
- Lighting
- Access to Peace River Park
- Canoe/Kayak Launch
- Landscaping



MULTI-FAMILY WORKFORCE HOUSING - ONGOING

In 2015, the CRA began working toward developing a vacant lot they own in downtown Wauchula. The plan called for a mixed-use development. It quickly became clear after receiving a concept and OPC for the project, the CRA did not have the funds for such a development. While the project stalled, it was just a few months later that another opportunity presented itself. In January 2016, the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) and Industrial Development Authority (IDA) hosted a public meeting to discuss housing needs in Hardee County. These meetings brought to light the dire need for multi-family workforce housing. This solidified that the CRA's plan for their development was needed in the county and therefore they set out to find a way to make it happen; partner with a private developer. In order to make the project more enticing, the CRA incentivized the project at \$150,000 and partnered with the IDA for another \$200,000.



In 2018 the CRA saw the first of three projects under this goal come to fruition with West Park Place. In 2020 the second project was completed with the completion of the Cobb project. This project not only met the housing need but also put a vacant property in the heart of downtown Wauchula back on the tax roll.

Palmetto 8, the third and final project under this goal, is slated for completion in the summer of 2021. This project will bring life to a vacant building with the addition of 8 new apartments, a dental office, and 3 office spaces. It too is incentivized through a CRA/IDA partnership totaling \$350,000.

ASSESSED VALUE					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	% Value
West Park Place*	\$154,337	\$218,051	\$642,730	\$733,649	375%
Cobb Development*	\$40,098	\$68,847	\$75,732	\$83,305	108%
Palmetto 8**	\$276,411	\$276,411	\$289,560	\$256,099	ongoing
*Grant awarded November 2016					
**Grant awarded February 2017					

IN-FILL HOUSING - ONGOING

As the CRA was meeting a need for multi-family housing, a new need became apparent; single-family workforce housing. Throughout F.S. 163 Part III, housing for low to moderate income levels is discussed. It is a function of the CRA to examine the program area and address any need there may be. Specifically, this goal is addressed in the CRA Masterplan 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

The city owns several residential lots. They agreed to partner with the CRA and deeded 215 W. Bay Street (now addressed as 303 S. 8th Avenue) to the CRA for development with the first house built under the Wauchula Housing Grant Program.

Taking into account the house appraised for \$180,000, the program lists the house at that price as to not affect other local comparables. However, in an effort to keep the price more affordable for the moderate income earner as determined by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, a \$20,000 grant in the form of credit at closing is awarded to the approved applicant. The program is offered on a first come first serve basis. The first applicant to bring back an application, a pre-approval letter, and the income verification form included in the packet, will be eligible to move forward with their bank through the lending process. Construction was completed in September 2020.



PARKS AT PEACE RIVER PHASE II - ONGOING

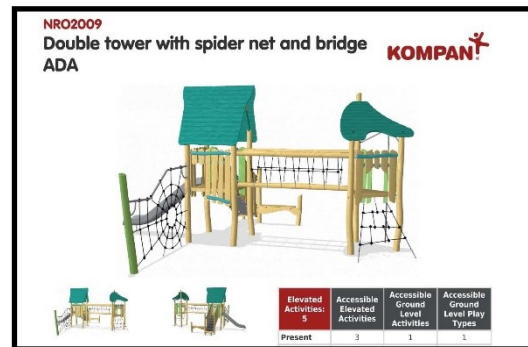
Phase II of the five phase Parks at Peace River Project includes the construction of the main pavillion. This pavillion will include restrooms, a deck area for picnicing, a kiosk for a potential vendor, and a storage area for kayaks and canoes. The design of the pavillion is unique in that it includes an elevated walkway that winds through the tree canopy from the parking lot.

The project was bid in June of 2020 and eight submittals were received. The contract was awarded to Bay Construction for the amount of \$371,153.89. Through the remainder of FY 19-20 the contractor, architect, and CRA staff fine-tuned the design and worked toward permitting.



PARKS AT PEACE RIVER PHASE III – ONGOING

In January 2020 the CRA applied to the Economic Development Authority (EDA) for a grant to fund Phase III of the Parks at Peace River Project for the amount of \$142,757. This phase includes the playground. The CRA was successful at receiving the grant. Because the grant is a reimbursement, construction was budgeted for FY 20-21.



PARKS AT PEACE RIVER PHASE IV – ONGOING

Additional grants were applied for from the EDA in January 2020. Phase IV includes renovation and enhancement to Peace River Park. A Recreation and Trails Program Grant provided by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection was received in June 2019 for \$200,000. An EDA grant was applied for and received to cover the remaining cost of \$454,500. The project moved forward to finalize construction documents and permitting. The grants are reimbursable and therefore funds for construction were budgeted in FY 20-21.

PARKS AT PEACE RIVER PHASE V – ONGOING

The final phase of the Parks at Peace River Project also included upgrades and renovations to Peace River Park. A Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program grant application was submitted to FDEP for \$200,000 and awarded in September 2020. The CRA budgeted for construction in FY 20-21.

LANDSCAPE & LAWN CARE – ONGOING

Beautification remains a key element in revitalization and economic growth. People want to visit and live in an area that feels warm and inviting. Therefore, the CRA takes great pride in the appearance of the city, particularly the Hwy 17 and Main Street corridors, as they provide a first impression to those entering the area. It is for this reason that the CRA continues to fund the maintenance of the landscaping in those areas through a private contractor. The city parks and grounds department is not large enough to keep up with the work involved to keep it up to standards and still maintain the other areas of the city.

In January 2020, the contract for services to maintain the landscaping was issued out for bid. In March a new contract was awarded to Krause Grove Services.

BROWNFIELD - ONGOING

The brownfield site at 226 W. Main Street continues to be monitored. Contamination levels have yet to decrease enough nor been maintained at a level allowing for closure. We continue to monitor and work with FDEP on further steps.



The CRA is awaiting 2019 and 2020 for the tax credit certificates from the State of Florida valued at a total of \$31,554.68. These credits will be sold and the funds used to help offset the cost of the clean-up process.

MAIN STREET WAUCHULA, INC

The CRA is able to further their redevelopment efforts through the partnership with Main Street Wauchula, Inc. This non-profit organization 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. While many events were cancelled, Main Street Wauchula remained hard at work bringing people downtown and working with the downtown businesses. Highlights for the year include but are not limited to:

- Hosted another successful Shop Small Saturday with businesses reporting an average increase of 28% in sales and 41% in the number of transactions
- Added yet another tour time to the popular Historic Ghost Tour enabling close to 270 individuals to learn more about Wauchula and Hardee County's rich history
- Fit in five of six Open Mics and five of six downtown movies before shutdown
- Decorated downtown to host the 2020 graduation parade
- Implemented weekly virtual meetings for downtown businesses to keep them up to date on emergency orders, Payroll Protection Plan funds, CARES funding, other grants, and training opportunities made available to them during the pandemic
- Implemented the "Out of the Box" campaign to promote the innovative ideas our downtown businesses came up with to remain in operation while their doors had to remain closed
- Awarded \$5,337.50 in grants to assist downtown businesses
- Purchased an additional 50 seat cushions for the Historic City Auditorium
- Assisted the CRA with the completion of two state grants for auditorium renovations
- Advocated for Industrial Development Authority to purchase buildings on Main Street for the location of R. Riveter by funding concepts to demonstrate how the buildings could look with appropriate paint and signage as well as funded a parking lot concept, showing an estimated 64 spaces could be accommodated while allowing for trucks to enter for delivery



FINANCIAL REPORT

CITY OF WAUCHULA	
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY	
AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2020	
ASSETS	
CLAIM ON POOLED CASH	\$ 534,665.59
	\$ 534,665.59
LIABILITIES	
AP POOLED	\$ (62,866.55)
WAGES PAYABLE-PAYROLL A/C	\$ (2,662.54)
	\$ (65,529.09)
FUND BALANCE	
BUDGET FUND BAL. - SYSTEM	\$ (542,847.15)
ENCUMBRANCES CONTROL	\$ 47.97
RESERVE FOR ENCUMBRANCES	\$ (47.97)
FUND BALANCE	\$ 79,497.79
	\$ (463,349.36)
REVENUE	
INTEREST -- CRA MM	\$ (989.68)
PARK PLACE LEASE	\$ (14,400.00)
CONT. HARDEE CO. TIF	\$ (448,542.00)
CONTRIBUTION SPEC PROJECTS	\$ (51,500.00)
CONT. CITY OF WAUCHULA TIF	\$ (281,169.00)
	\$ (796,600.68)
EXPENSE	
EXECUTIVE SALARIES	\$ 83,651.09
PROF SERVICES - GENERAL	\$ 5,407.90
ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING	\$ 3,300.00
CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	\$ 46,604.63
BROWNFIELD CLEANUP	\$ 32,023.13
TRAVEL & PER DIEM	\$ 1,160.89
COMMUNICATION - TELEPHONE	\$ 965.46
RENTALS & LEASES	\$ 12,000.00
INSURANCE	\$ 1,827.22
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	\$ 2,800.00
PRINTING & BINDING	\$ 2,017.98
OPERATING SUP & EXP	\$ 1,704.00
BOOKS, PUBLICATIONS & ED	\$ 920.00
PROP TAX - INCOME PROPERTIES	\$ 2,755.95
IN-FILL HOUSING	\$ 140,881.56
WAYFINDING SIGNS	\$ 1,300.00
CREWS PARK	\$ 379,844.51
GRANTS - RESIDENTIAL	\$ -
GRANTS - COMMERCIAL	\$ 37,649.22
CONTRIBUTIONS-MAIN ST PRO	\$ 34,000.00
	\$ 790,813.54

*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 19-20 report was not complete. [Click here](#) to find the fiscal year 18-19 report.



WAUCHULA COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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