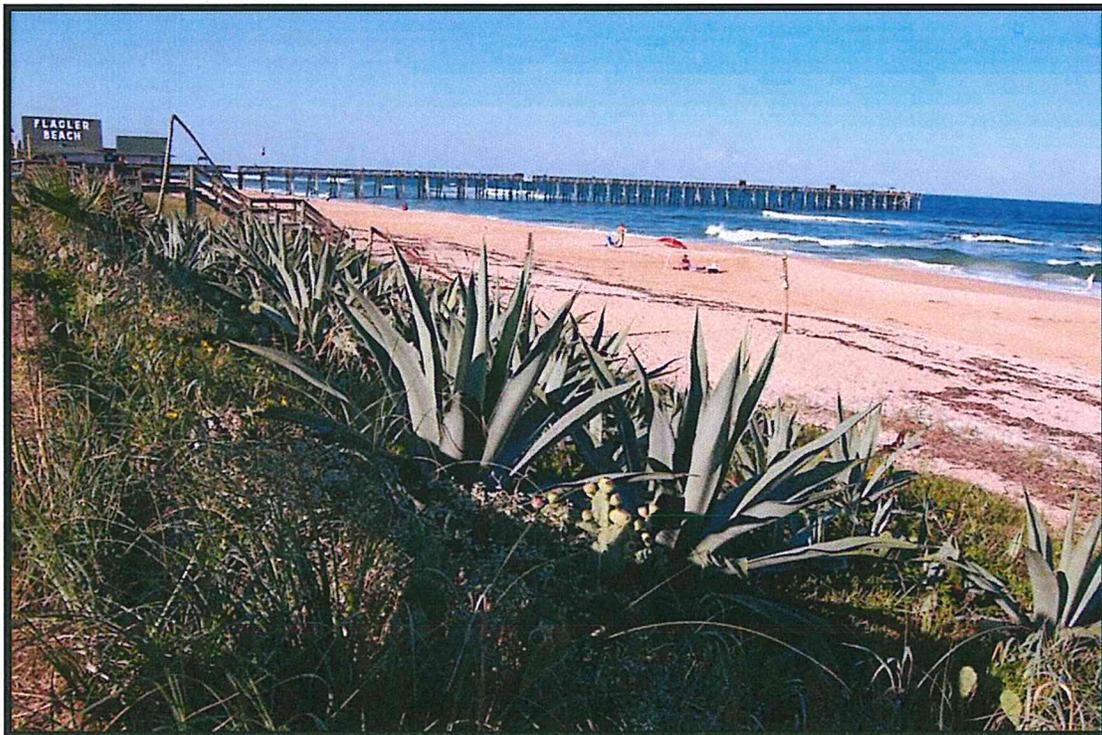


# City of Flagler Beach Community Redevelopment Agency

Fiscal Year 2012-2013 Annual Report



March 28, 2014

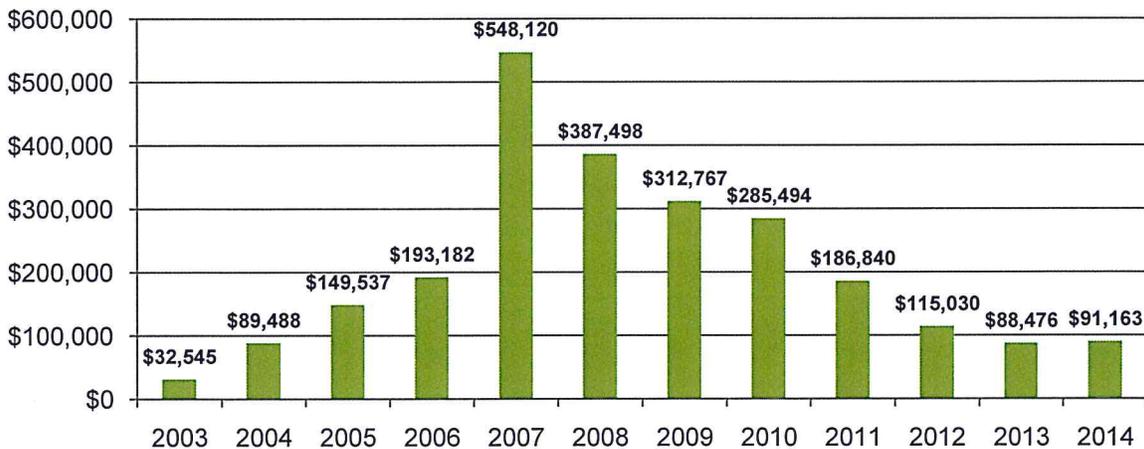
## A Message from the City Manager

Fiscal Year 2012-2013, abbreviated **FY13**, encompasses October 1, 2012 through September 30, 2013. For the City's Community Redevelopment Agency, FY13 was a rewarding year in terms of accomplishment, but a challenging one from a financial perspective. Let's start with the challenges.

The CRA is funded by Tax Increment Financing (TIF), a unique tool that allows the City to leverage public funds to promote redevelopment improvements in the private sector. The dollar value of all real property within the Community Redevelopment Area is determined as of a fixed date, also known as a "frozen value." Flagler Beach's frozen value, assessed in 2001, is \$24,154,210.

Frozen value revenues are available for general government purposes. But tax revenues from increases in real property value, that is, amounts above the frozen value, are referred to as "increment" and are deposited into the CRA Trust Fund, and dedicated to the redevelopment area.

The graph below depicts the highs and lows of the TIF in the past decade. The year 2007 shows the height of the real estate bubble. The inevitable burst of that bubble is reflected in the precipitous drop in 2008, with steady declines in subsequent years. The good news is that there was an improvement from 2013 to 2014, albeit a small one.



The depressed revenue stream means there is less money to operate the CRA, develop incentives or grants, or pay back loans. To conserve funds, the CRA was forced to eliminate its Director position and re-assign those agency duties to me, the City Manager. In addition, the operating budget itself was throttled down to provide only the debt obligations from previous capital projects, along with the mandated financial audit of the CRA Fund itself. Even so, it was necessary to dip into the Trust Fund Reserves to balance the budget in FY13.

In spite of the financial constraints, the City was able to:

- complete a major improvement project, Downtown Streetscape,
- implement an innovative sign initiative, Pedestrian Wayfinding Signage,

- enhance our monthly agency- hosted event, First Friday Music in the Park, and
- continue to assist existing and new business through the Ambassador Program.

While not strictly within the boundaries of the Community Redevelopment Area, there are two major accomplishments currently underway whose impact on our downtown is too big to leave unmentioned.

The Boardwalk Promenade, designed, permitted, and contracted in FY13, will be completed in May 2014. Designed to complement the existing boardwalk, it expands on it by extending one block south to S. 8<sup>th</sup> Street and four blocks north to N. 4<sup>th</sup> St. In addition to new ADA compliant sidewalks and curbing, there will be two covered overlook structures with benches. Landscape islands and six interpretive panels are added enhancements. Viewed from wider perspective of the boardwalk, pedestrians will actually have a better view of the downtown businesses.

Equally important is the pier improvement project. Pier “hardening” will reinforce the pilings and cross beams, helping to ensure this icon remain a major attraction for residents and visitors alike for decades to come. One does not have to be a fisherman to walk to the end of the pier, do an about-face, and enjoy the panorama of the colorful array of businesses and homes dotting our downtown.

It’s true for me, and perhaps true for some of you as well, that as I get bogged down in day-to-day challenges, there is a tendency to take my surroundings for granted, forgetting to appreciate what inspired the desire to call Flagler Beach “home.” Sometimes it takes an outsider with a fresh pair of eyes to remind us just how unique our city truly is. Such was the realization when a friend forwarded a newspaper article from the travel section of a New Jersey newspaper, *The Press of Atlantic City*, dated November 17, 2013. Mary Ann Anderson gives a glowing report of all of Flagler County, but had this to say about us:

Flagler Beach was our last stop on this slice of A1A Americana. No high-rise condominiums spoil the view here and the restaurants, beach boutiques and roadside motels are one-of-a-kind.

Those who weren’t pointing and gawking at the whales [off the pier] were either fishing, walking along the beach, or parasailing over the pristine blue-green water. When the surf’s up and the waves are just right, the six miles of Flagler Beach have been luring surfers for decades.

It is a beach village for certain, Caribbean-bright with colors and sounds but definitely old Florida.



Looking ahead, there is optimism that we can build on our past accomplishments as we set our sights on opportunities for improvement to create an even more wonderful lifestyle.

Bruce C. Campbell  
City Manager  
March 21, 2014

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## Community Redevelopment Agency Board

The Flagler Beach City Commission serves as the Community Redevelopment Agency Board. Members for FY 2012-2013 are:

Mayor	Linda Provencher
Chairman	Steve Settle
Vice-Chairman	Jane Mealy
Commissioner	Kim Carney
Commissioner	Joy McGrew
Commissioner	Marshall Shupe

## Community Redevelopment Agency Staff

City Manager                      Bruce C. Campbell

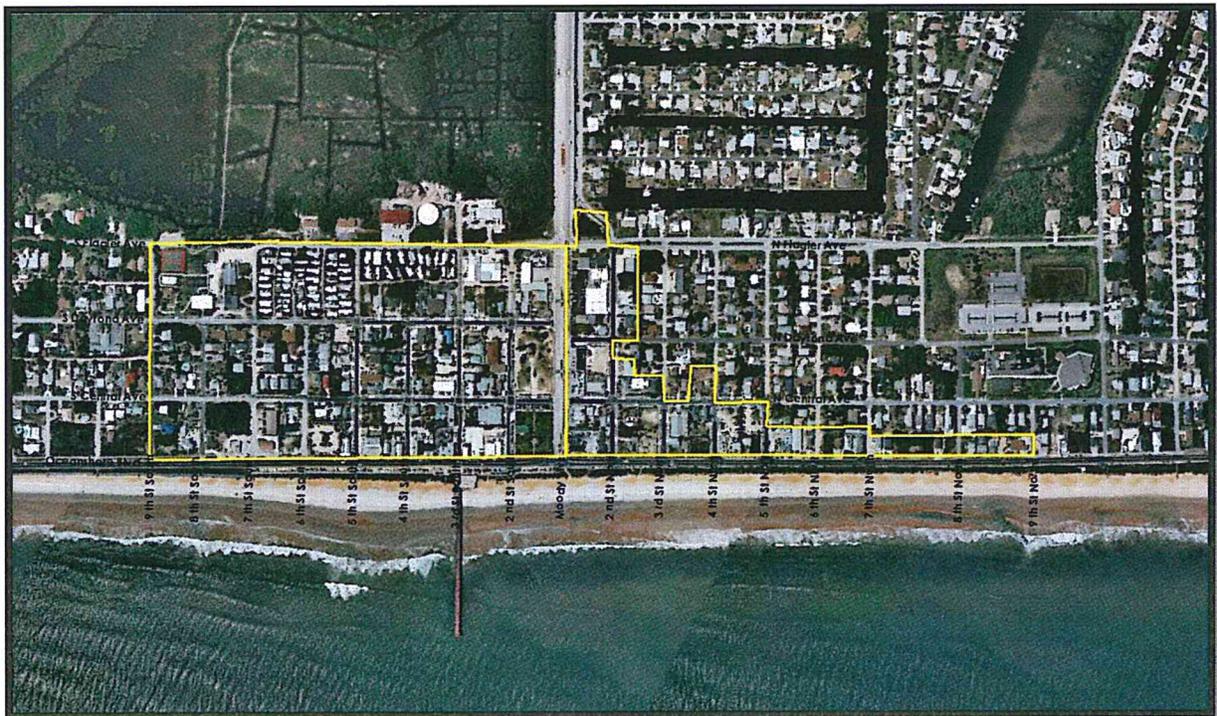
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## History of the Community Redevelopment Agency

In 1969, the Florida Legislature passed the Community Redevelopment Act as a means for local communities to conserve, rehabilitate, or redevelop an area that constitutes an economic and social liability, due to a decrease in the tax base. Through Ordinance 2002-12, the City Commission of Flagler Beach officially designated itself as the Community Redevelopment Agency pursuant to Section 163.387 of the Florida Statutes.

The core downtown area was generally described as bounded by North 9<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, South 9<sup>th</sup> Street on the south, Oceanshore Boulevard (SR A1A) on the east, and Flagler Avenue on the west. It was selected for revitalization due to an inadequate street layout, shortage of parking, and general deterioration of structures.

Over the years, the Community Redevelopment Plan has been revised as major initiatives have been completed. Utilities have been moved underground, sidewalks have been redone, streets have been repaved, stormwater systems have been constructed, and the number of parking spaces has increased through the purchase of vacant lots. Wickline Park has been upgraded with lighting and picnic tables, and decorative street light posts have been added, to name just a few.



CRA Boundaries are approximate.

## Major Goals and Objectives

Each goal has includes specific objectives.

### **Goal 1. Overall Redevelopment**

**Establish downtown Flagler Beach as a focal point for the community and to attract visitors from the entire region and beyond.**

Objective 1.1. Implement the downtown master plan and architectural design guidelines through streetscaping and roadway design.

Objective 1.2. Encourage a viable downtown continuing to bring special events and music to downtown and keeping community stakeholders involved.

Objective 1.3. Continue to explore the opportunities to redevelop Block 9 (Moody Subdivision) as a high-end, mixed-use private property that will contribute exponentially to the tax rolls.

### **Goal 2. Overall Image**

**Increase the visibility, identify, and unity of the downtown through physical design, promotion, uniform store hours, and improved signage.**

Objective 2.1. Seek to create public-private partnerships to develop a marketing strategy and business recruitment / retention strategy for the CRA area.

Objective 2.2. Promote a unified advertising campaign for downtown retailers by establishing a coordinate online Welcome Packet, Parking Map, and Business Directory in partnership with other local organizations.

### **Goal 3. Environmental**

**Create an attractive, safe and comfortable environment conducive to activities during the day and evening.**

Objective 3.1. Maintain city services for sidewalk maintenance and streetscapes. Continue to encourage building improvements by property owners.

Objective 3.2. Produce information with community events to be held in the CRA. Continue to hold / host special community activities and events in the downtown to draw visitors, tourists and community members to the CRA.

Objective 3.3. The CRTA shall encourage and promote the use of its parks for recreation for all ages by continuing to apply for FRDAP Grants and funding opportunities.

Objective 3.4. Encourage visual enhancement program through the elimination of visual pollution and by screening surface parking areas with landscaping or other means, and assist in the creation of ordinances that will enforce these types of enhancements.

Objective 3.5. Encourage the elimination of blighted structures in order to improve appearance of vacant lots / parcels by taking inventory and proactive Code Enforcement efforts.

#### **Goal 4. Funding**

**To seek additional funding sources for CRA projects. The CRA is empowered to use its monies as matching funds, regardless of what entity applies for the grant, provided the proceeds of the grant will be used to further the redevelopment plan within the redevelopment area.**

#### **Goal 5. Transportation**

**Provide an integrated transportation and parking system to and within the downtown area.**

Objective 5.1. Develop an effective marking and management system for the current parking system in conformance with the Master Plan and the Design Guidelines.

Objective 5.2. Continue to implement the Downtown Master Plan and the Design guidelines related to parking and overflow with the CRA.

Objective 5.3. Continue to explore the possibility of pain parking while taking into consideration the need to seek majority buy-in (acceptance???) from local business owners and residents.

Objective 5.4. Add public parking on South Flagler Avenue, implement (create ?) off-site parking area map, and provide information regarding the movement of people about downtown.

## FY 2012- 2013 Achievements

### I. Downtown Streetscape Project

The fourth and final phase of the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan was completed in FY13. The construction cost totaled over \$1.5 Million, with 91% of that cost from the Florida Department of Transportation and 9%, or \$136,968, funded by a city match – actually loaned to our CRA from our City’s General Fund. The loan is to be repaid to the General Fund over a five year period at an annual interest rate of 2%.

This final phase of the project is what we all have looked so forward to –the last “brush stroke” of the past 5 years of heavy construction throughout our CRA. We can finally enjoy the benefits of having lived with all the dust, road closures, and minor inconveniencies that come with the installation of decorative light poles, new street signs and posts, trash receptacles, benches, bike racks, and landscape enhancement, including palm trees. In addition, the continuance of the open paver parking design, Miami-type curbing, sidewalks, and new road beds and asphalt paving were all realized throughout the southern half of our CRA district.



## II. Pedestrian Wayfinding Signage Project

In February 2013, the Pedestrian Wayfinding Sign Program was launched as a means to direct motorist and pedestrian traffic alike to local businesses.

It involved an effort from many different parties. The Economic Development Task Force designed the sign post with its iconic wave crests at the top, and designated preferred locations for the signage.

The City Commission passed an amendment to the Land Development Regulations to allow postings in public rights-of-way.

The Flagler Beach Chamber of Commerce made a generous donation of \$7,800, to have the signs fabricated by LCP Machine, Inc. in Bunnell.

Various local graphics companies designed the business logo for the individual sign blades.

And the city maintenance crew installed the sign posts.

The signage pilot area was the southern section of the district, i.e. south from Moody Boulevard (SR 100) to South 9<sup>th</sup> Street, and from Oceanshore Boulevard (SR A1A) west to South Flagler Avenue.

To date, nine sign posts advertising 41 businesses have been erected. Signage in the northern section is scheduled for later this year.



### III. First Friday “Music in the Park”

On the evening of the First Friday of every month, the City hosts its “Music in the Park” event at Veterans Park, ideally located at the intersection of State Routes A1A and 100. With no shortage of regional talent, it’s easy to feature a single band each playing rock and roll favorites, culminating in the Navy Band Southeast’s *TGIF* at least once a year, resplendent in military uniform.

Several local restaurants and the Rotary Club provide quick meals in the Food Court section of the park. Another section is allocated to the Kids Zone, where children can romp safely inside a roped off area featuring a bounce house, balloon-shaping clown, and kid-friendly vendors.

To ensure there is plenty of space for those with lawn chairs wanting a clear view of the band stand, non-food vendors are lined up along Central Avenue between South 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets. This encourages visitors to traverse the street, and exposes them to brick and mortar businesses south of the park.

Restaurants and shops on all four sides of the park (including the pier restaurant) know to expect an increase in business when the music is hot and the breeze is cool. A boutique that may not be entered that evening may well be patronized the next day. Average attendance topped 1,000 residents and guests at each First Friday for FY13.



## First Friday Features, October 2012 through September 2013

Date	Theme	Entertainment	Activity
October	Fall Festival	Swanky Mo's Revue	Bed Races Pumpkin Decorating Contest
November	Thanksgiving Festival	Navy Band Southeast's T.G.I.F.	Chili Cook-off Rain Gutter Regatta Races
December	Holiday at the Beach	Church and Youth Choirs	Lighting of the Park Pictures with Santa
January	Tropical Winter	The Piano Man	The "Dip-Off"
February	Winter in the Park	Jimmy Mason	Pinewood Derby
March	Paws in the Park	Cesar Romero	Pet Clinic w/ Haven Hospice Second Chance Rescue Flagler Integrative Veterinarian
April	Spring in the Park	Mason Music Group	Foods of the World
May	Rock in the Park	Navy Band Pride	Bike Rodeo, Fashion Show, Wheels in Motion
June	Summer in the Park	Tarnished Halo	Rain Gutter Regatta
July	Freedom in the Park	Navy Band Sound of Freedom	Tie Dye T-Shirts
August	Dancing in the Park	Cesar Romero	Dance Contest, Annual Dip- Off, Bubble Release
September	Carnival in the Park	Navy Band TGIF	Corvette Cruise-In, Dunk Tank, Bean Bag Toss



#### IV. Business Ambassador Program

FY13 marks the third consecutive year of the Business Ambassador Program, created to assist both existing business owners looking to expand or relocate, and new businesses considering opening shop in Flagler Beach. Members of the ambassador team include a City Commissioner, the Flagler Beach Chamber Council Chairman, and local entrepreneur with a lot of experience working in the city. The City is represented by its City Planner and City Manager.

In the relaxed setting of the City Manager's office, the Ambassadors listen as the business owner(s) explains his or her business proposal. Based on the specifics of type and location, the prospective owner is provided with relevant information on ordinances, zoning, permitted uses, building and parking requirements, inspections, and procedures for securing a Local Business Tax Receipt. Equally important is a detailed explanation of the proper order of steps that must be taken to ensure a smooth transition from inception to completion of the business owner's vision.

A round table discussion ensues, with the goal of delivering "A" level customer service, saving the business time and money. The Ambassador Program has met with and assisted thirty-seven businesses city-wide in the last three years. It's an investment in the City of over \$4.5 Million, and the creation of 250+ new jobs.



## V. Review of Agency Goals

During our CRA Board meeting on January 24, 2012, the Flagler Beach City Commission, which sits as the CRA Board, gave staff direction to commence an update of the agency's goals. This direction was preceded by a presentation by Carol Westmoreland from the Florida Redevelopment Association, who suggested our CRA focus on only three or four key goals.

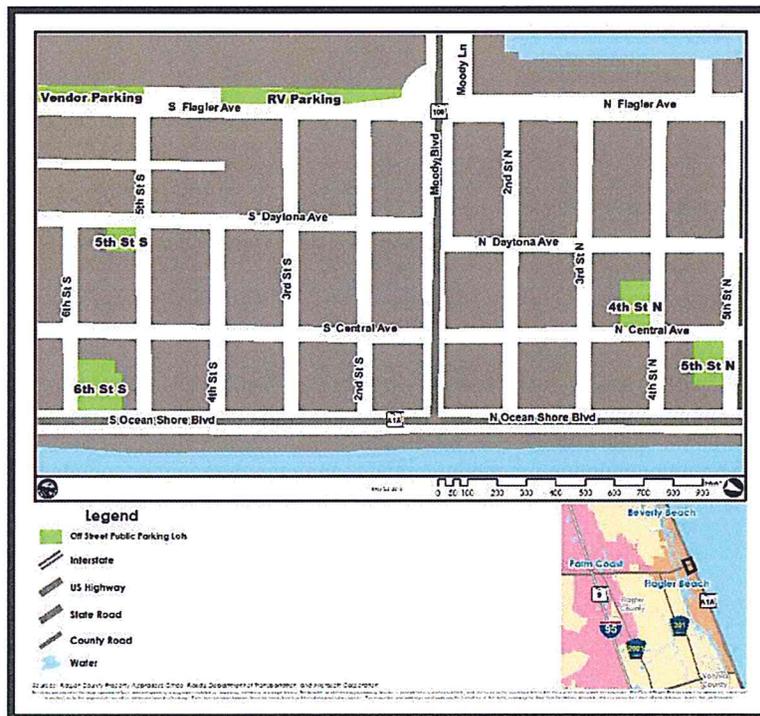
During a subsequent March 2013 board meeting, the amended major goals, objectives and policies were adopted by Resolution 2013-16. Those goals are listed on pages 7 and 8 of this Annual Report.

## VI. Parking Ad-Hoc Committee Formed

Parking is one of the most basic elements in maintaining a viable downtown retail center and facilitating the expansion of retail activity. Recognizing this fact prompted the City Commission to appoint a parking ad-hoc committee in January of 2013.

The purpose of the committee is to study parking issues while considering the pros and cons of instituting a new policy in the heart of our downtown retail sector: paid parking.

This is a big step that requires an objective evaluation based on the collection of factual data, and requires careful consideration. We anxiously await the outcome of the committee's recommendations and the CRA Board's final decision.



## Looking Ahead

The next fiscal year will remain a challenge to our CRA, primarily due to the financial shortfall we continue to witness from depressed property values. Even so, staff will persevere during these difficult times by paying down the debt from past capital improvements, and at the same time tackling additional responsibilities. We will stay the course until we see improved economic times.

