

Next Meetings 11am-1pm:

- March 28 – Community Planning Meeting
- April 18 – Water/Sewer Meeting

Location:

American Beach Community Center
1600 Julia Street

Community Redevelopment Area Process and Timeline

A Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) is a dependent special district in which any future increases in property values are set aside to support economic development projects within that district. This is also known as “tax increment financing.”

How are they authorized?

Under Florida law (Chapter 163, Part III), local governments can designate areas as Community Redevelopment Areas when certain conditions exist. Since all the monies used in financing CRA activities are locally generated, CRAs are not overseen by the state, but redevelopment plans must be consistent with local government comprehensive plans.

Examples of conditions that can support the creation of a Community Redevelopment Area include, but are not limited to:

- presence of substandard or inadequate structures
- shortage of affordable housing,
- inadequate infrastructure,
- insufficient roadways,
- inadequate parking.

To document that the required conditions exist, the local government must survey the proposed redevelopment area and prepare a **Finding of Necessity**. If the Finding of Necessity determines that the required conditions exist, the local government may create a Community Redevelopment Area to provide the tools needed to foster and support redevelopment of the targeted area. **The County had a Finding of Necessity study completed in Fall 2019 that found the statutory criteria could be met. The study has not been presented at this time to the BOCC for adoption.**

Who oversees them?

The activities and programs offered within a Community Redevelopment Area are administered by the **Community Redevelopment Agency**. A five- to nine-member CRA “Board” created by the local government (city or county) directs the agency. The Board can be comprised of local government officials and or other individuals appointed by the local government. Alternatively, the local government elected officials (in our case, the BOCC) could serve as the CRA Board.

What is involved in their operation?

The Community Redevelopment Agency is responsible for developing and implementing the **Community Redevelopment Plan** that addresses the unique needs of the targeted area. The plan includes the overall goals for redevelopment in the area, as well as identifying the types of projects planned for the area.

The redevelopment plan is a living document that can be updated to meet the changing needs within the Community Redevelopment Area; however, the boundaries of the area cannot be changed without starting the process from the beginning.

Examples of projects that could be included in American Beach are: streetscapes and roadway improvements, building renovations, new building construction, flood control initiatives, parking, neighborhood parks, sidewalks and street tree plantings. The plan can also include redevelopment incentives such as grants and loans for such things as façade improvements, sprinkler system upgrades, signs, and structural improvements.

How are they funded?

Tax increment financing is a unique tool available to cities and counties. The dollar value of all real property in the Community Redevelopment Area is determined as of a fixed date, also known as the “frozen value.” Taxing authorities, which contribute to the tax increment, continue to receive property tax revenues based on the frozen value. These frozen value revenues are available for general government purposes. However, any tax revenues from increases in real property value, referred to as the “increment,” are deposited into the Community Redevelopment Agency Trust Fund and dedicated to the CRA.

The tax increment revenues can be used immediately, saved for a specific project, or can be bonded to maximize the funds available. Any funds received from a tax increment financing area must be used for specific redevelopment purposes within the targeted area, and not for general government purposes.

How does the CRA Process Work?

Several steps would have to be accomplished before the Community Redevelopment Area could become a reality:

I. Adopt the Finding of Necessity. This will formally identify the statutory conditions within the targeted area and establish the area boundary. This is done by the Board of County Commissioners through a resolution.

The Finding of Necessity study was completed by the County in Fall 2019. The study found that the American Beach area meets the requirements for a Community Redevelopment Area.

Next step: Take to the Board of County Commissioners for adoption by resolution.

Estimated timeframe: Due to internal agenda deadlines and required notice to taxing authorities, earliest date would be March 23, 2020 or after. Consider addressing after community water/sewer meeting on April 18, 2020, based on information about potential for water/sewer district.

II. Create a Community Redevelopment Agency. A Community Redevelopment Agency is a public body created to carry out the purposes of the Community Redevelopment Area. The Board of County Commissioners would adopt by resolution a finding to create a Community Redevelopment Agency.

The BOCC must then by ordinance create the Community Redevelopment Agency board, which is not less than five or more than nine members. The BOCC appoints the members and selects the Chair and Vice-Chair. (As an alternative, the BOCC can elect to serve as the Community Redevelopment Agency.)

Next step: County needs to determine internally the process for staffing and administration of a Community Redevelopment Area and Agency. Staff need BOCC direction on the Agency – do they wish to appoint a separate board or serve as the Agency themselves. Staff time will be needed to draft related resolutions/ordinances and provide notice to taxing authorities.

Estimated timeframe: Realistically, 2-4 months after adoption of the Finding of Necessity.

III. Develop and adopt the Community Redevelopment Plan. The plan addresses the unique needs of the targeted area and includes the overall goals for the area, as well as identifying specific projects. The Plan is adopted by the Community Redevelopment Agency after they are created. The Plan requires review by the County Planning and Zoning Board and adoption by the Board of County Commissioners.

Next step: The PEO Department has a budget to assist with creation of a master plan for American Beach. Identify facilitator to assist with community planning sessions. PEO staff can assist with creation of the plan document.

****Important to note:** the master plan process can be utilized to serve as the Community Redevelopment Plan for a CRA. There are statutory requirements in F.S. 163.362 that would have to be included. However, the planning process can also result in a standalone master plan for the vision of the community even if a CRA is NOT created.

The planning is in a good place to start since we have identified top priorities with the community through the survey sent out in December 2019. The survey indicated support for creating a community master plan. Top issues mentioned by the community are protecting: beach and dunes, history and heritage, community, residential zoning. Top items to enhance include: beach, lighting, streets/sidewalks, structures, Evans' Rendezvous, and water/sewer. A master plan can also address goals such as creating a

local historic district or conservation district, both options that garnered initial support in the community survey.

For an example of a master plan on a larger-scale, you can see the PEO Department's work on the Western Nassau Vision Book: www.nassaucountyfl.com/westernnassau. Master plans are not regulatory documents themselves but provide a framework for future planning and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies.

Estimated timeframe: Work on the planning efforts can start immediately, since the planning can be part of supporting a future CRA plan or a standalone plan. Completion by December 2020.

IV. Create a Redevelopment Trust Fund. Establishment of the Trust Fund enables the Community Redevelopment Agency to direct the increase in real property tax revenues back into the targeted area. The Trust Fund is created after approval of the Community Redevelopment Plan. The BOCC must create a redevelopment trust fund by ordinance.

Next step: If CRA is created, coordinate with County Office of Management and Budget to create Trust Fund.

Estimated timeframe: Dependent on completion and adoption of CRA plan.