

Auburndale Community Redevelopment Agency

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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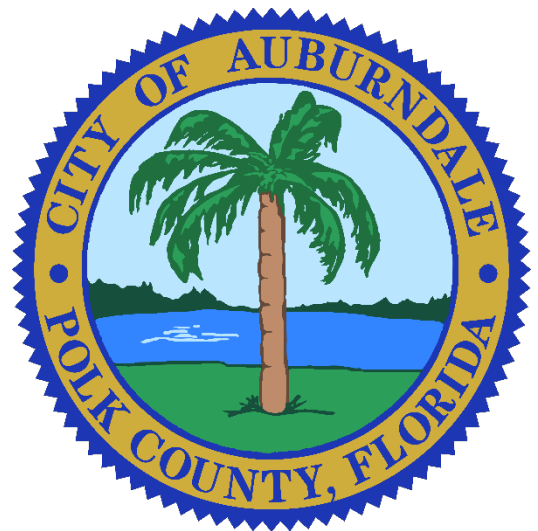
City Hall – 1 Bobby Green Plaza

Auburndale, FL 33823

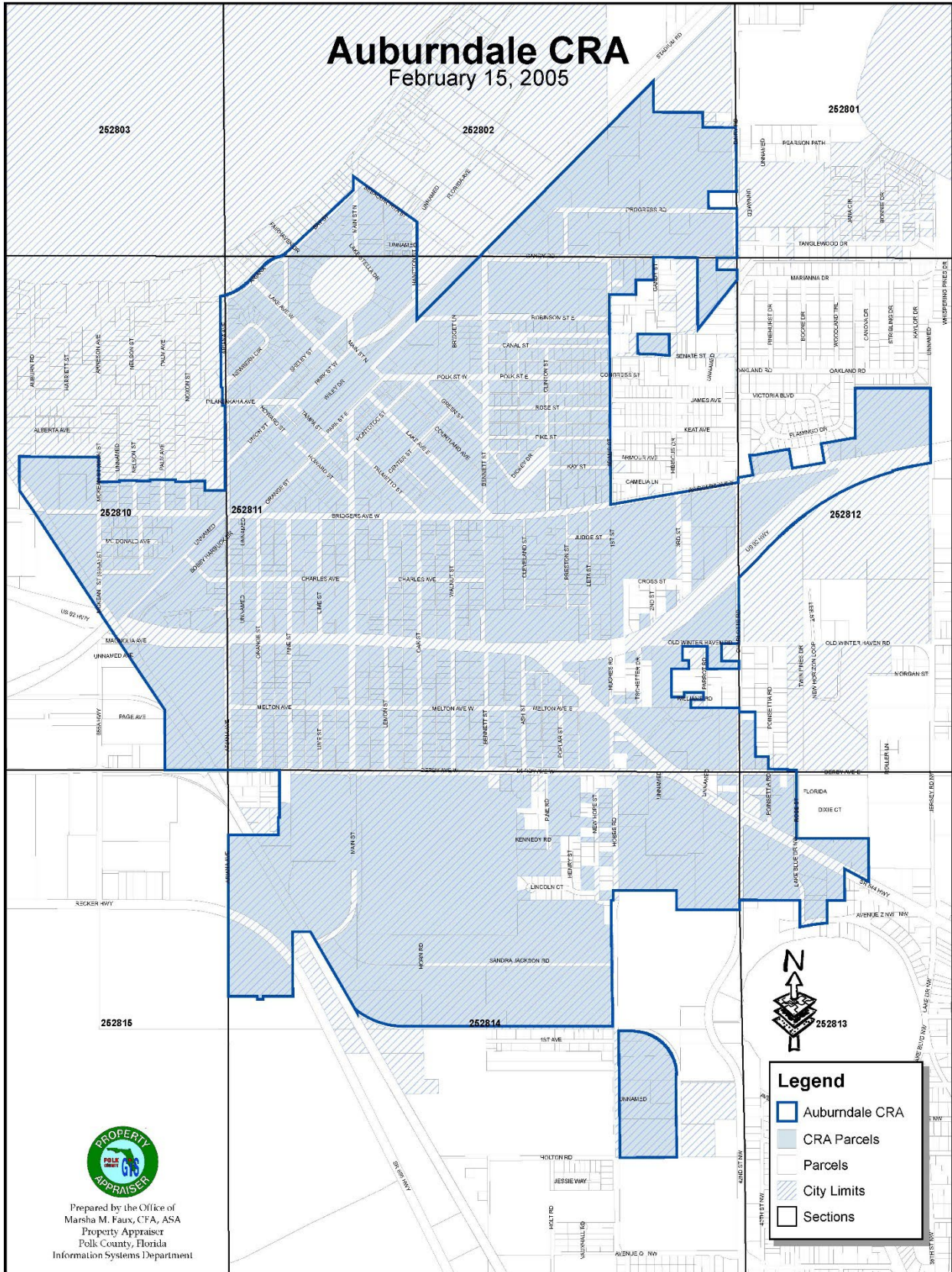
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Fiscal Year 2023-2024



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Historical Perspective

On February 3, 1992, The Auburndale City Commission passed Resolution No. 92-5, which found that the Downtown Business District, Downtown Residential District, and surrounding commercial and retail properties needed redevelopment, rehabilitation, and conservation in the interest of the public health, safety, morals and welfare of the residents of Auburndale. The Auburndale Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was formally established on February 17, 1992, with the adoption of Ordinance No. 769 by the Auburndale City Commission.

On June 1, 1992, The Auburndale City Commission adopted the Community Redevelopment Plan as a strategy for the CRA to facilitate a comprehensive and coordinated revitalization of the designated CRA area. The Redevelopment Plan followed the adoption of a *Finding of Necessity* or “Blight Study,” which identified the redevelopment needs of the community.

By adoption of Ordinance No. 1117 on July 7, 2003, the CRA Board is comprised of the five (5) members of the Auburndale City Commission and two (2) appointed Auburndale residents. The purpose of the CRA is to undertake projects and programs in the CRA District that create a community which is economically viable and provides a good living environment in which to work, shop, and play.

The Auburndale Community Redevelopment Agency Board as of the end of the 2023-2024 fiscal year (September 30, 2024) was comprised of:

Tim Pospichal	Chair
Ellie Harper	Vice-Chair
Dorothea Taylor Bogert	Board Member
Keith Cowie	Board Member
Jordan Helms	Board Member
Alex Cam	Board Member
Bill Sterling	Board Member

Purpose of Annual Report

The Auburndale Community Redevelopment Agency is required by the Community Redevelopment Act to submit a progress report of the year’s community redevelopment activities, including a complete financial statement of assets, liabilities, income, and operating expenses. This report is due and must be reported to the governing body on or before March 31st of each year.

This report is being filed concerning the annual redevelopment activities of the Auburndale Community Redevelopment Agency for FY 23/24. This report is prepared and filed consistent with Florida Statutes.

Additionally, the CRA is required to submit an independent financial audit of its trust fund to each taxing authority. The Governance Letter to the Community Redevelopment Agency Board, Financial Statements, and Independent Auditor’s Reports are included with this report. A copy of this audit is made public and provided to each taxing authority upon completion and acceptance.

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Taxable Value

In February 1992, when the CRA was established, the Base Year Taxable Value of the CRA was \$59,948,355. Since the inception of the CRA, property values have increased to \$266,454,800.00 year ending 2023. This represents a 444% increase in property values since 1992. The Current Year Tax Incremental Value is \$206,506,445.00, which is the difference from the Base Year Taxable Value and the Current Year Taxable Value. Funding for the CRA is generated based on this Current Year Tax Increment Value. The CRA budgets 95% (percent) of the Current Year Tax Increment Value, or \$196,181,122.75, multiplied by the current ad valorem tax rates of the participating jurisdictions, or TIF. The TIF generated \$834,064.04 from the City of Auburndale and \$1,311,510.05 from Polk County, given their respective ad valorem rates of 4.2515 for the City and 6.6852 for the County. The total contribution from the City and County to the Auburndale Community Redevelopment Trust Fund equaled \$2,145,574.09 for FY 23/24. The below chart further explains the funding.

FY 2023/2024 Auburndale Community Redevelopment Agency Funding

Current Year Taxable Value in CRA	\$266,454,800.00
Base Year Taxable Value in CRA	-\$59,948,355.00
Current Year Tax Increment Value	\$206,506,445.00
Portion on which the payment is based.	x 95%
Dedicated increment value	\$196,181,122.75
Amount of payment to redevelopment trust fund from City	\$834,064.04
Amount of payment to redevelopment trust fund from County	\$1,311,510.05
Total Contributed to the Auburndale CRA Trust Fund for FY 2023-2024	\$2,145,574.09
Total number of Activities Started	5
Total number of Activities Completed	5
Total amount expended for low and middle income affordable housing	\$0.00

The Auburndale Community Redevelopment Agency was able to accomplish a number of significant projects in FY 23/24.

ACHIEVEMENT	CRA PLAN PAGE
Infrastructure – Streetscape Updates	Pg. 17, 22, 30
Economic Development – Park Street Commercial	Pg. 27, 28
Economic Development – Howard Street Property Purchase	Pg. 22, 29

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STREETSCAPE UPDATE.

Since 1992, the Auburndale CRA has completed numerous streetscape improvements that have helped preserve the quaint small-town feel of Auburndale. In FY 23/24, the CRA budgeted \$100,000 towards updating these streetscapes.

Planters. Auburndale’s streetscapes include large concrete planters that the CRA initially invested in installing. This past fiscal year, staff has contracted with a firm to plant seasonal annuals in the planters, and City Staff maintains them by ensuring they are irrigated, fertilized, and pruned.



PK Avenue Streetscape Update. The PK Avenue Stormwater and Road Diet project was completed by the CRA in FY 16/17. City staff maintains the plants and stormwater facilities on PK Avenue. This project has been recognized for its efforts to improve the water quality in Lake Lena, and also for utilizing Florida Friendly Landscaping that reduces water usage and encourages wildlife. In FY 23/24, PK Avenue was recognized as a “Florida-Friendly Landscape” by the University of Florida’s IFAS Extension. The corridor is doing a great job of improving the water quality and is a model “garden” for residents who want to plant native landscaping in their yards.



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Streetscape (Palmetto/Howard St.)

In FY 23/24, the CRA allocated \$1,500,000 towards the streetscape of Howard Street, Palmetto Street, and Center Street. Engineering firm Chastain Skillman and Landscape Architecture firm Catalyst Design Group were retained at a fee of \$385,615 to design and engineer these streetscapes, similar to other streetscapes that have been completed in the downtown CRA area. They will include undergrounding of electric utilities, brick paver onstreet parking, period lighting, and updated landscaping to complement the businesses located on these streets. Preliminary opinions of cost were completed that estimated construction costs above budget for each streetscape. The allocated funding will be reserved for future streetscaping and the undergrounding of electric utilities for these streetscapes.



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PARK STREET COMMERCIAL RESERVES. The Auburndale CRA maintains a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan to help plan and budget for projects in upcoming years that fall within the categories of redevelopment in the CRA Plan. In FY 15/16, the CRA Board identified a retail redevelopment opportunity on West Park Street, in the location of the City's Civic Center as a project for possible funding in FY20/21. The project would entail relocating the City's Civic Center, Senior Center, and Parks and Recreation office, to create a mixed-use redevelopment project on the northwest side of the Downtown Park. FY 20/21 was the first year that the CRA started budgeting a reserve account to accomplish this project and by FY 22/23 has built a reserve amount of \$3,500,000 towards the Park Street Commercial Project.

During FY 22/23, the CRA transferred \$1,000,000 to the City to assist with the plan to displace the City's facilities, and the City began the relocation process by hiring a design-build firm tasked with engineering, architectural and construction services for a new Civic Center. In January 2024, the Community Redevelopment Agency paid the remaining \$2,500,000 to the City to purchase the City's properties on Park Street. The CRA now owns the City's facilities and leases them back to the City to continue their traditional use as rental facilities and offices. With ownership of the properties, the CRA will be able to start preparing a Request for Letters of Interest and/or a Request for Proposals from developers interested in redeveloping the Park Street properties.



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HOWARD STREET PROPERTY PURCHASE. On its desired projects list for funding in future budgets, the Auburndale CRA had listed the Property Assembly of property near the City's skateboard park with the intention of creating redevelopment opportunities and additional economic development activity downtown. In January 2024, property located at 107 Howard Street near the City's skateboard park became available for sale, and after obtaining an appraisal and an agreed upon purchase price with the property owner, the CRA was able to purchase the properties for a sale price of \$238,000 in May 2024. The CRA was able to utilize unanticipated tax increment revenue to purchase the property. The CRA also demolished the structure on the property to create a vacant lot for future economic development opportunities.



REDEVELOPMENT AND IMPACT FEE ASSISTANCE GRANTS. In 2014, the Auburndale CRA created two economic development incentive programs for property and business owners located in the CRA District. These incentives utilize the CRA's tax increment funding to leverage private investment that meet the goals of the CRA, which are to improve Auburndale's physical form, attract new growth and business, and create or maintain a sense of vitality.

Since 2014, the CRA has budgeted \$1,050,000, and expended \$646,018.78 through Redevelopment and Impact Fee Assistance Grants. In FY 23/24, the CRA awarded one (1) Redevelopment Grant in the amount

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of \$53,135.62 to a private business that made significant capital improvements to their properties by building out a medical office building on Orange Street. The CRA has an available balance of \$403,981.22 for qualified grants in future Fiscal Years.



OTHER EXPENDITURES. Since 1992, the Auburndale CRA has completed numerous streetscape improvements, park enhancements, and other large capital expenditures that have helped preserve the quaint small-town feel of Auburndale. To maintain these improvements, a portion of the CRA's annual budget is dedicated to the upkeep and on-going maintenance of these projects. These maintenance costs include funding for two (2) Service Worker positions, vehicle repair and reimbursement, the bi-annual fertilization of almost two-hundred palm trees, the clock tower service contract, maintenance and repairs of the antique lighting, supplies for horticulture and CRA maintained landscape areas, utility expenses, sidewalk repairs, and palm tree replacement. In FY 23/24, these costs totaled \$303,611.00.

In Summary

The Auburndale Community Redevelopment has been extremely successful investing in infrastructure in the CRA area through streetscaping, park and recreational improvements, and working with business partners to increase the taxable value in the redevelopment area. Moving forward, continued investment in infrastructure projects that improve the economic vitality and living environment will encourage the taxable values to continue an upward trajectory.

A copy of the Auburndale Community Redevelopment Agency Budget, Audit, and Annual Report can be found on the City's website at www.auburndalefl.com. Please contact the Auburndale CRA at (863) 965-5530, if you have any questions in regards to redevelopment projects or grants.