CITY OF CLERMONT
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA)
6:00 PM, Tuesday, September 8, 2015

Council Chambers
685 West Montrose Street

CALL TO ORDER

Item No. 1 - Minutes	Consider approval of the July 28, 2015 Community Redevelopment Agency minutes.
Item No. 2 - CRA Redevelopment Plan	Consider expansion of the CRA District and amendment to the Redevelopment Plan
Item No. 3 - Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Budget	Review of the Clermont Redevelopment Agency proposed budget

ADJOURN

Any person wishing to appeal any decision made by the City Council at this meeting will need a record of the proceedings. For that purpose, such person may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), if any person with a disability defined by the ADA needs special accommodation to participate in this proceeding, then not later than two business days prior to the proceeding he/she should contact Clermont, City Clerk's Office, 352-241-7331.

Please be advised that if you intend to show any document, picture, video or items to the Council or Board in support or opposition to any item on the agenda; a copy of the document, picture, video or item must be provided to the City Clerk for the City's records.

City of Clermont
Community Redevelopment Agency
July 28, 2015

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) met on Tuesday, July 28, 2015 in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Community Redevelopment Agency Chairman Gail Ash called the meeting to order at 6:04pm with the following members present: Mary Jo Pfeiffer, Timothy Bates, Keith Mullins, and Diane Travis. Other City officials present were: City Manager Gray and City Clerk Ackroyd.

CRA Members Roger Pierce and Ray Goodgame were absent.

Item No. 1 - Minutes

Community Redevelopment Agency minutes of March 10, 2015.

> CRA Member Mullins moved to approve the minutes; seconded by CRA Member Bates. The motion passed with all members present voting aye.

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Item No. 2 – Application 2015-10; *Roman Gonzales, Epic Cycles*

Economic Development Director Hitt presented the Building Code Assistance application from Epic Cycles, 528 8th Street. The request was for (4) four 5-ton air conditioning units; including electrical and duct work. The building exceeds 7,600 square feet, which is approximately four times larger than other buildings requesting air conditioning under the Building Code Assistance Program. Three quotes have been obtained and 63% of the cost will be paid by the applicant. Staff recommended approval.

Roman Gonzalez; owner, was present.

CRA Chairman Ash opened the public hearing. There were no public comments. CRA Chairman Ash closed the public hearing.

> CRA Member Mullins moved to grant the application for assistance; seconded by CRA Member Bates. The motion passed with all members present voting aye.

CRA Member Pfeiffer inquired if a precedent would be set for other large facilities. Economic Development Director Hitt indicated setting a precedent was possible. He stated the City could modify the criteria for future grant applications.

Item No. 3 – 2014 Annual Report

Economic Development Director Hitt provided an overview of the Community Redevelopment Agency 2014 Annual Report. The report will be forwarded to the various taxing agencies within the CRA District and posted on the city's website.

CRA Member Travis arrived into the meeting.

Item No. 4 – Incentive Summary

Economic Development Director Hitt presented the Community Redevelopment Agency Incentive Summary. The program was created in August 2010 and established four grant programs for the CRA District. The program is funded by the Redevelopment Trust Fund through Tax Increment Financing.

Economic Development Director Hitt spoke on possible upcoming requests. In addition; benches, trash cans and bicycle racks have been ordered for the Historic Downtown Clermont and Waterfront Park area

City Manager Gray commented the Master Plan contractor; GAI, will address the Community Redevelopment Agency on possible expansion of the CRA District.

Economic Director Hitt mentioned the Community Redevelopment Agency budget will come before the Board.

CRA Member Travis inquired of the status of Tattletale. Mr. Hitt stated there were issues with the original contractor.

CRA Chairman Ash asked when Lilly's on the Lake is expected to open. Economic Director Hitt commented they expected to open the first week in August.

Adjourn: With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm.

APPROVED:

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Gail L. Ash, CRA Chairman

ATTEST:

____
Tracy Ackroyd, City Clerk

CITY OF CLERMONT

AGENDA ITEM

Meeting Date

Tuesday, September 8, 2015

Agenda Item Name

CRA Redevelopment Plan

Requested Action

Move to approve the *Expansion Area Finding of Necessity*, and proceed with the amendment to the CRA Redevelopment Plan.

Staff Report

The Downtown Clermont Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and 157 acre District were created in 1997 by adoption of Resolution No. 950. Updates to the Plan were completed in 2005 and 2010. The CRA district has experienced significant redevelopment efforts through various streetscape projects and the incentive grant programs. The CRA District is also the heart of the recently approved *Downtown & Waterfront Master Plan*.

The Redevelopment Plan must remain flexible enough to enable the CRA to work on various projects within the parameters of the Plan, and supported by the annual budget.

This request is to approve the Expansion of the CRA District to include the following area properties:
* The northeast - Waterfront Park beach area and the old Bell Ceramics site off East Ave.;
* The west area - CBS Builders Supply , Excelatech and Clermont Public Works;
* South of State Road 50 - this frames in the downtown approach off SR 50.

Each of these areas will be discussed during the presentation as to their effect on the downtown and links for the Master Plan.

The approach, or entrance areas leading into the downtown and waterfront are vital to the CRA District, and the expansion areas capitalize on those areas, in addition to adding properties to the CRA District. These help with the growth of the core part of Clermont and the Master Plan area.

Additional Analysis

Fiscal Impact Summary

Fiscal Impact	Fund Number and Description	Available Budget Amount

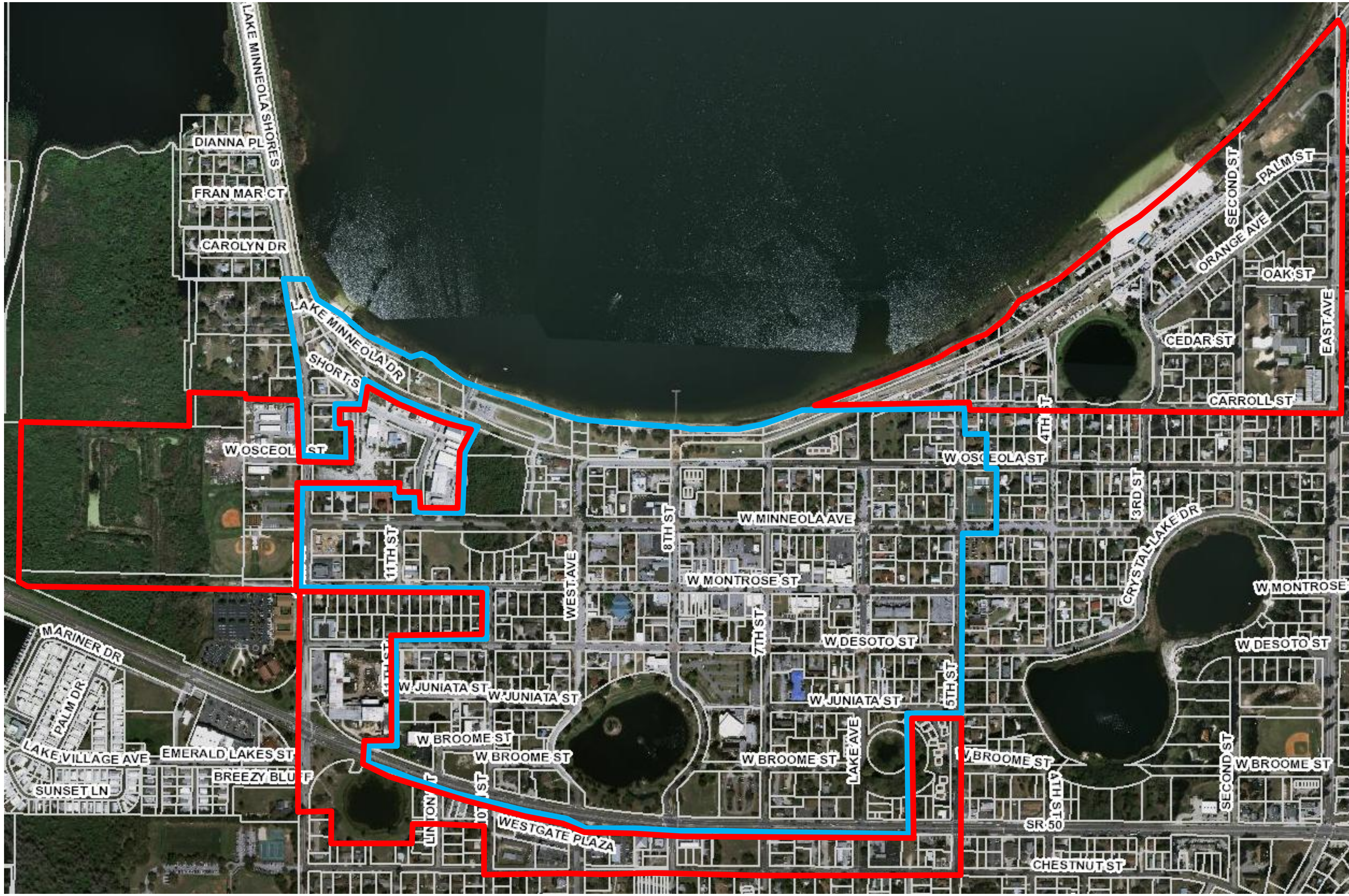
Exhibits Attached (copies of original agreements)

1.	CRA District Expansion Map	CRA Map-NEW 2015.pdf
2.	CRA Expansion Area Finding of Necessity	Clermont Format CRA FON rev.8.21.15.pdf

Downtown Clermont Redevelopment Agency ~ District Map

CRA – existing

CRA – proposed expansion



\\cityhall\shares\Economic Development\JHITT\CRA\2015 CRA Plan\CRA Map-NEW 2015.doc

Potential Community Redevelopment Expansion Area Finding of Necessity

GAI Project Number: R140908.01

August, 2015

Prepared for: City of Clermont

Prepared by: GAI Consultants
Orlando Office
618 East South Street
Suite 700
Orlando, Florida 32801

Table of Contents

1.0 Project Overview

The purpose of this analysis is to provide data that documents potentially blighting conditions, as defined in Section 163, Part III, Florida Statutes (F.S.) (the "Redevelopment Act") within the City of Clermont study area in Lake County, Florida.

1.1 Introduction

The initiative to expand the CRA and update the redevelopment plan for the Clermont area arises from the need to stimulate reinvestment in the area and identify new funding sources which would improve existing conditions and generate additional improvement activity. A redevelopment initiative to identify new market potential for the area and the supporting upgrades and additions to the infrastructure, commercial and/or office uses, and overall physical environment is a necessary component to the broader goal of attracting investment.

Before identifying prospective private sector interest in the area, current blighting influences should be addressed to begin rebuilding the infrastructure necessary to support and attract investment. Deteriorating conditions of structures, utilities, and general physical environment undermine economic development efforts and impede the improvement of the area.

Identifying resources to remove blighting influences is essential to remain competitive in the economic marketplace. An initial step is creating the CRA with community approved boundaries. A Finding of Necessity (FON) assists in identifying a proposed redevelopment area. A subsequent community redevelopment plan will specify the desired improvement projects and implementation steps to execute them. The CRA will be funded in most part by increment revenues designated specifically to the proposed redevelopment area.

The purpose of this analysis is to support the link between the statutory definition of a "blighted area" and the Clermont proposed redevelopment area expansion under examination. If the determination of such conditions of blight can be established based on the statutory definitions set forth in Section 163, Part III, Florida Statutes (F.S.), the "Redevelopment Act," the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) can be created, or in this case expanded, in conjunction with preparation and adoption of a redevelopment plan. Analysis of data and documentation of the Clermont Study Area within this report is evaluated based on the provisions established in Florida's Redevelopment Act, Section 163, Part III, Florida Statutes (F.S.).

City of Clermont data, county maps, study area specific maps, and government maintained statistics have been examined in conjunction with GAI Consultants staff interpretations of supplied data in assessing the proposed redevelopment area.

1.2 General Objectives and Purposes of the Redevelopment Act

The purpose of the Redevelopment Act is to assist local governments in preventing and/or eliminating blighted conditions detrimental to the sustainability of economically and socially vibrant communities or areas. The following paragraphs describe those blighting conditions, their specific effects, and the intentions of the community redevelopment regime as a tool for implementing policy and programs.

- Section 163.335(1), F.S. …[blighted areas] constitute a serious and growing menace, injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and welfare of the residents of the state; that the existence of such areas contributes substantially and increasingly to the spread of disease and crime, constitutes an economic and social liability imposing onerous burdens which decrease the tax base and reduce tax revenues, substantially impairs or arrests sound growth, retards the provision of housing accommodations, aggravates traffic problems, and substantially hampers the elimination of traffic hazards and the improvement of traffic facilities; and that the prevention and elimination of slums and blight is a matter of state policy and state concern in order that the state and its counties and municipalities shall not continue to be endangered by areas which are focal centers of disease, promote juvenile delinquency, and consume an excessive proportion of its revenues because of the extra services required for police, fire, accident, hospitalization, and other forms of public protection, services, and facilities.

- Section 163.335(2), F.S. …certain slum or blighted areas, or portions thereof, may require acquisition, clearance, and disposition subject to use restrictions, as provided in this part, since the prevailing condition of decay may make impracticable the reclamation of the area by conservation or rehabilitation; that other areas or portions thereof may, through the means provided in this part, be susceptible of conservation or rehabilitation in such a manner that the conditions and evils enumerated may be eliminated, remedied, or prevented; and that salvageable slum and blighted areas can be conserved and rehabilitated through appropriate public action as herein authorized and the cooperation and voluntary action of the owners and tenants of the property in such areas.
- Section 163.335(3), F.S. …powers conferred by this part are for public uses and purposes for which public money may be expended and police power exercised, and the necessity in the public interest for the provisions herein enacted is declared as a matter of legislative determination.
- Section 163.335(5), F.S. …the preservation or enhancement of the tax base from which a taxing authority realizes tax revenues is essential to its existence and financial health; that the preservation and enhancement of such tax base is implicit in the purposes for which a taxing authority is established; that tax increment financing is an effective method of achieving such preservation and enhancement in areas in which such tax base is declining; that community redevelopment in such areas, when complete, will enhance such tax base and provide increased tax revenues to all affected taxing authorities, increasing their ability to accomplish their other respective purposes; and that the preservation and enhancement of the tax base in such areas through tax increment financing and the levying of taxes by such taxing authorities therefor and the appropriation of funds to a redevelopment trust fund bears a substantial relation to the purposes of such taxing authorities and is for their respective purposes and concerns.
- Section 163.335(6,) F.S. …there exists in counties and municipalities of the state a severe shortage of housing affordable to residents of low or moderate income, including the elderly; that the existence of such condition affects the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of such counties and municipalities and retards their growth and economic and social development; and that the elimination or improvement of such conditions is a proper matter of state policy and state concern is for a valid and desirable purpose.

According to Chapter 163.356 of the Redevelopment Act, a FON analysis focuses on a determination of blight and/or slum conditions in an area which may *"constitute a serious and growing menace, injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and welfare of the residents of the state,"* and negatively burden a community's traffic system, utilities, ad valorem revenues, property values, and social fabric which would otherwise contribute positively to the economic stability of the community. As a simultaneous operation in conjunction with the finding of such a blighted area, the need for a CRA is established.

The CRA will possess the authority to govern the course of action concerning the redevelopment and rehabilitation of the Study Area, and further, in the corporate limits of the City of Clermont in the case that the governing body of the City has acceded in the redevelopment plan set forth by the City.

1.3 Declarations and Process

The initial step in pursuing the expansion of an existing CRA is documenting the existing conditions. This analysis of the Clermont Study Area summarizes the extent and effects of blight which lead to the deterioration of economic, social, and physical components of the Study Area. This analysis documenting the extent of blight, represented through the physical conditions, economic instability, and conclusionary analysis in support of that documentation is referred to herein as the "Report." GAI Consultants' staff, along with Clermont staff, has analyzed government maintained statistics and reports and the physical condition of the area, resulting in the documentation and analysis of the blighting conditions of the Study Area contained within this Report.

1.4 Historical Perspective and Integrity of the Study Area

Clermont is situated in Lake County which was named for its over 1,400 named lakes. Strategically located just west of Orlando and north of Disney World, Clermont has a population of over 29,000 based on 2013 Census data. With over 14.8 square miles Clermont is the second largest city in Lake County with the largest population of all cities in Lake County. Unemployment rates in Lake County and the cities within Lake County have been on the rise over the last four years. According to 2013 Census estimates, Lake County's unemployment rate was 12.0%, while the unemployment rate in Clermont was 10.8%. These rates represent an increase over the unemployment rates of 2010 when Lake County's unemployment rate was 8.1% and Clermont's unemployment rate was 8.3%.

The city was founded in 1884 and incorporated in 1916. The history of Clermont mirrored that of many other cities, following a path of decline prior to the creation of the City's Downtown Redevelopment Area in 1997. In the years following WWII, the automobile and the mobility that it afforded the average American redefined development patterns and business location decisions. As new highways and interstates were constructed to meet the demands of an increasingly auto-oriented society, many businesses abandoned downtowns for the increased visibility and accessibility of highway commercial centers. As a consequence, many traditional downtown areas became less economically vital and attracted less private and public investment. Buildings and infrastructure were allowed to deteriorate, contributing to the decline of downtown viability and property values.

In 1997 by adoption of Resolution No. 950, the City of Clermont identified the Downtown Redevelopment Area and created the Downtown Clermont Redevelopment Agency whose charge was to prepare a redevelopment plan, implement planned projects and obtain the necessary funding. The downtown area continues to be the focal point of a robust and growing community and the continued redevelopment of the 157 acres within the redevelopment area has been a continuing effort. New studies, projects and cooperation within from the business and residential community within the redevelopment area are necessary to continue these efforts.

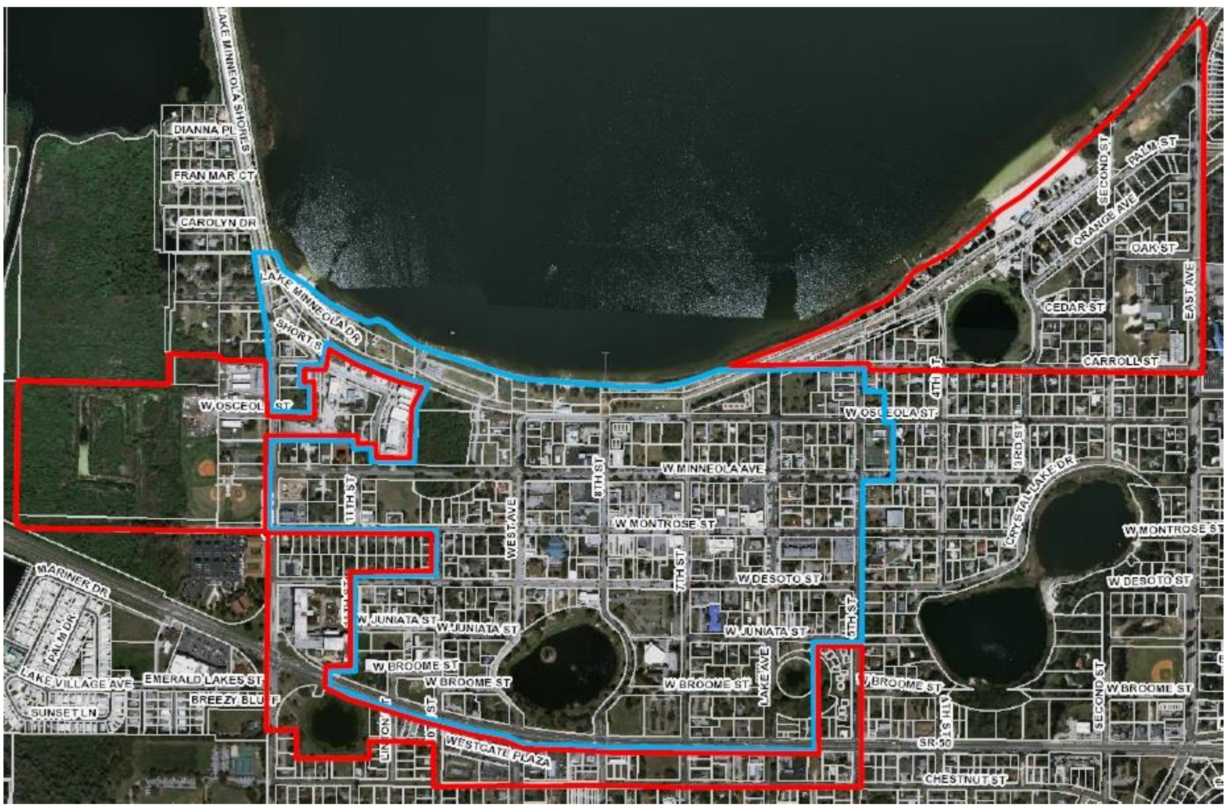
The goals and objectives of the plan were kept broad enough to allow for flexibility in the projects which would be implemented, but also realistic to ensure that they could be accomplished. As with any plan, the redevelopment plan should be updated from time to time in order to take advantage of new ideas and efforts to continue with redevelopment in the district.

In 2005 the original redevelopment plan was updated substantially which assisted in providing continued diversity allowing the Downtown Clermont Redevelopment Agency the ability to work in a variety of ways to support the revitalization of the district. The 2005 update included streetscape in the West Montrose Street area consisting of new sidewalks, trees, benches, and new lighting with underground infrastructure improvements. These physical improvements assisted in efforts to stabilize the downtown area. Continued streetscape projects and other new programs were implemented to continue the effort to revitalize the downtown area and create a new sense of vitality.

A minor update to the redevelopment plan was completed in 2010, the update incorporated incentive programs ranging from façade improvement grants and impact fee assistance to building code compliance assistance. Additionally, street lighting improvements were included for when LED lighting is integrated to further improve the downtown lighting conditions. Since the completion of the 2010 redevelopment plan update, the Downtown Clermont Redevelopment Agency has awarded over $160,000 in grants through four different grant programs available within the district, the Façade Improvement Grant Program ($123,708.33), the Building Code Assistance Program ($27,762.50), the Impact Fee Assistance Program ($7,518.43), and the Building Permit Refund Program ($1,911.40). With the assistance of these grant programs, over $324,000 of projects were completed by 24 grant recipients.

Though the downtown area has undergone significant redevelopment, this redevelopment is hindered by the limitation of the district boundary. At the periphery of the district boundary additional blighted areas exist. In pursuit of addressing the conditions of properties surrounding the existing redevelopment area, the City of Clermont has expressed interest in expanding the district to provide greater diversity and a broader focus to the rehabilitation of the downtown area. The continuation of the Downtown Clermont Redevelopment Agency governing the redevelopment efforts within the expanded area will provide opportunities to encourage new capital investments in the areas of residential, commercial, recreational, and tourism development. For the purposes of this report, the area under examination will be referred to as the proposed redevelopment area, as well as the Study Area.

GAI Consultants' analysis of the conditions of the Study Area is confined to a specific geographic area within the City of Clermont generally shown in Map 1.



Map 1 - Study Area and Proposed CRA Boundaries

As can be seen in Map 1, the Study Area is predominately industrial and residential, with some institutional and recreational areas (76 single-family, 35 multi-family, 21 commercial, 13 industrial, 4 institutional) and vacant (7 residential, 12 commercial, 2 industrial, 14 institutional) parcels. The existing CRA boundary is demarcated by colored boundary lines in blue, the proposed CRA expansion area is demarcated by colored boundary lines in red.

Waterfront Park overflow parking

grass parking lot

The proposed expansion areas of the CRA also include a few large industrial properties. Many of these properties are deteriorated, many with significant City code violations apparent on visual inspection.

Overgrown landscaping & dilapidated fencing

overflowing dumpster within right-of-way

1.5 Standards for Blight

Having identified the study area as a group of residential, industrial and institutional/recreational properties, the specific conditions that constitute blight as listed in the Redevelopment Act were considered.

The Redevelopment Act currently, in effect, establishes three discrete pathways to determine if a study area is a "blighted area", sufficient to warrant the full application of redevelopment powers conveyed under Chapter 163.

- "Alternative One" involves the layering of two tests. The first test is broadly conditional and the second test is criteria specific. Both tests must conclude that the described conditions exist affirmatively.

- "Alternative Two" involves a specific agreement among parties subject to a prospective Trust Fund agreement. Where such agreement exists, then the jurisdiction seeking to designate a redevelopment area needs to pass a less rigorous test. As in the first alternative, this test relates to specific criteria and it must conclude affirmatively.
- Notwithstanding the requirements for the first or second alternative, “Alternative Three” involves the Governor certifying the need for emergency assistance under federal law as a result of an emergency under s. 252.34(3), F.S.

Alternative One

The first of Alternative One's two tests requires that a study area identified as a blighted area contain a "substantial number of deteriorated, or deteriorating structures, in which conditions, as indicated by government-maintained statistics or other studies, are leading to economic distress or endanger life or property." Recent court decisions have affirmed that structures include infrastructure.

The second of Alternative One's two tests is that the area must then be one in "which two or more of the following factors are present".

a) Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, parking facilities, roadways, bridges, or public transportation facilities;
b) Aggregate assessed values of real property in the area for ad valorem tax purposes have failed to show any appreciable increase over the 5 years prior to the finding of such conditions;
c) Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
d) Unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
e) Deterioration of site or other improvements;
f) Inadequate and outdated building density patterns;
g) Falling lease rates per square foot of office, commercial, or industrial space compared to the remainder of the county or municipality;
h) Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;
i) Residential and commercial vacancy rates higher in the area than in the remainder of the county or municipality;
j) Incidence of crime in the area higher than in the remainder of the county or municipality;
k) Fire and emergency medical service calls to the area proportionately higher than in the remainder of the county or municipality;
l) A greater number of violations of the Florida Building Code in the area than the number of violations recorded in the remainder of the county or municipality;
m) Diversity of ownership or defective or unusual conditions of title which prevent the free alienability of land within the deteriorated or hazardous area; or
n) Governmentally owned property with adverse environmental conditions caused by a public or private entity.

Alternative Two

The Redevelopment Act also allows that a blighted area may be "any area in which at least one of the factors identified in paragraphs (a) through (n) of Section 163.40(8), F.S. are present and all taxing authorities (as such term is defined in the Redevelopment Act) subject to Section 163.387(2)(a), F.S. agree, either by interlocal agreement or agreements with the agency or by resolution, that the area is blighted.

Alternative Three

The Redevelopment Act also provides that "when the governing body certifies that an area is in need of redevelopment or rehabilitation as a result of an emergency under s. 252.34(3), F.S., with respect to which the Governor has certified the need for emergency assistance under federal law, that area may be certified as a "blighted area", and the governing body may approve a community redevelopment plan and community redevelopment with respect to such area without regard to the provisions of this section requiring a general plan for the county or municipality and a public hearing on the community redevelopment", Section 163.360(10), F.S. For example, On September, 1, 2004, Governor Jeb Bush declared a state of emergency for the entire State of Florida by Executive Order 04-192 because of Hurricane Francis. For example, on September 4, 2004, FEMA designated Pinellas County as a disaster area by FEMA-1545-DR.

2.0 Physical Environment Inventory

This section of the report documents the land uses, transportation systems, utilities infrastructure, and visual character of buildings and sites in the Study Area.

2.1 Land Use

These physical characteristics of the area play key roles in the development or utilization of land based assets. The land use inventory provides more perspective regarding the pattern of development activity, the inventory of land uses, the compatibility of nearby uses, and the impact of uses that may assist or deter development activity within the study area.

The study area consists of a variety of single family residential properties and industrial properties. However, the predominant use is residential properties. There are some government and institutional properties located in the study area as well.

Historically the downtown area developed as a centralized commercial business district with surrounding residential and industrial uses. The overall physical condition of the study area is fair. Pockets of deteriorated housing exist throughout the study area.

Deteriorated Housing

Deteriorated Housing

The bulk of structures within the study area are either single-family, multi-family, industrial properties, or institutional/recreational properties. 2014 Lake County tax records show that there are 166 taxable properties within the study area. Of those, 118 (71.1%) properties are single-family/multi-family residential, 15 (9.03%) are industrial, and 33 (19.9%) are commercial.

In all, there are currently a total of 166 tax-assessed properties within the study area. Of those 166 tax-assessed properties, 21 of them are currently vacant (unimproved, undeveloped, or cleared) which represents 12.7% of the entire proposed CRA expansion area. Those 21 vacant properties include 7 vacant residential properties (4.2%), 12 vacant commercial properties (7.2%), and 2 vacant industrial properties (1.2%). The vacant properties present the City with an opportunity for future development. Some of these vacant parcels include deteriorating fencing, litter, debris and/or tall weeds and grass on the site.

Vacant Parcel

Vacant Parcel

The following table shows the number of properties in the study area from the 2014 Lake County Tax Collector tax roll for each type of land use designation.

Land Use	Parcels	Acres
Single Family	76	19.69
Multifamily	35	6.59
Commercial	21	9.20
Industrial	13	17.77
Religious	1	0.55
Institutional	3	33.67
Vacant Institutional	14	19.59
Vacant Residential	7	1.36
Vacant Commercial	12	3.20
Vacant Industrial	2	2.75
TOTAL	**184**	**114.37**

A field review indicated that most of the structures within the Study Area are single story or two stories. Many of these properties are deteriorated or deteriorating and are in need of renovation or redevelopment. Some of the lots are platted inadequate sizes and are either too narrow or too shallow for development. Several properties in the proposed expansion area have the potential to be redeveloped and converted to a commercial or mixed use development.

Deteriorated industrial structure

Deteriorated multi-family structure

Within the study area, a substantial number of the improved properties are deteriorating or deteriorated. A significant number of properties have deteriorating driveways with crumbling asphalt, particularly among the multifamily residential properties. Many properties have paved driveways with no distinction between the driveway and the right of way which significantly increases the appearance of the asphalt width of the road. Generally, landscaping is overgrown among the multifamily properties. Some properties in the study area have boarded up windows and other damage. Overall, the condition of the multifamily residential properties in the study area is generally poor, though some are in fair condition.

Deteriorating single-family structure

Deteriorating commercial structure

Dumpster in front of commercial building   Cracked overgrown driveways & dirt driveways

The decline in the physical condition of many sites in the study area can be attributed, at least in part, to the age of the structures and the site requirements during the period in which they were built. According to the 2014 Lake County tax roll, less than 5% of the structures in the study area were built over the last ten years. In fact, since 2006, a combined total of only 5 properties were developed across the last eight years. The records demonstrate a lack of new development in the area and the predominance of materially older building stock.

2.2 Transportation, Road, and Traffic Conditions

Curbs gutters and sidewalks are present within some portions of the study area, however they are not consistent. With the lack of consistent of sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and bike lanes, the study area is not conducive for walking, jogging, or bicycling. As a whole, the study area lacks infrastructure for other forms of transportation except for vehicles. Furthermore, other improvements such as street light fixtures, street trees, pavement markings, pedestrian signs, and sufficient turning lanes are generally inadequate, missing, or in need of repairs or upgrading.

Deteriorated road, lack of curb, gutter & sidewalk   Sidewalk on one side only; missing curb & gutter

Deteriorated right-of-way

Sand & gravel driveways overflowing into right-of-way

2.3 Overall Site and Plat Conditions

The study area suffers from deficient infrastructure. For the most part, basic infrastructure including sidewalks, curbs, and gutters are lacking in the study area. Wastewater and stormwater infrastructure is generally inefficient and not to modern standards. These site deficiencies make redevelopment challenging and encourage lower property values in the area.

No sidewalks, curbs or gutters

No sidewalks

Many of the buildings in the study area are deteriorating. Part of the decline in the physical condition of buildings in the study area can be attributed to the age of the structures most of which were developed prior to 1980 (67%). Several of the properties are one or two level industrial structures. Many of these properties leave very little pervious surface available, using almost all of their lots for buildings and parking and leaving little room for landscaping, adequate drainage, or open space. The lack of pervious surface in combination with insufficient stormwater collection and treatment creates unsafe conditions.

2.4 Visual Character

The study area is made up primarily of residential properties with no unifying architectural style and no design standards. Many roads and driveways are crumbling and showing signs of neglect. The study area generally lacks uniform landscaping and streetscape improvements. Other factors contributing to the overall look of deterioration include trash in yards, cracked roads and sidewalks, broken curbs, poor housing conditions, broken/boarded up windows, vacancies and neglected landscaping. A common attribute of many of the residential, industrial and commercial properties is unkempt landscape on properties and in rights-of-way. A visual analysis of the Study Area indicated a significant number of residential properties can be classified as deteriorated or deteriorating.


Overgrown landscaping & cracked pavement


Neglected building damage


Neglected structures & overgrown landscaping


Cracked Driveway & boarded up windows

Many commercial and industrial properties in the area are fronted by large swaths of asphalt that are often dilapidated and poorly maintained. Such properties typically have paved most of the land area in front of the building structure. Because there is virtually no streetscape and little landscaping within the study area, these paved property frontages contribute to the appearance of continuous asphalt, thereby increasing the perceived width of the road. They also add to the amount of impervious surface in the area.

The transportation infrastructure in the study area, upon which the long term sustainability of the neighborhood and area depends, is not adequate to support a vibrant community. General absence of streetscape as well as pedestrian and cycling facilities (with the exception of the Lake Minneola Trail) limits the uses of the network and stunts redevelopment prospects.

Excess paving/driveway; no landscaping or sidewalk

Cracked & excessive paving/driveway

The several conditions documented in this analysis converge to undermine economic values by retarding a normally functioning real estate market. It is this normally functioning market that acts as the floor for economic value. If that floor cannot be maintained through a continuing exchange between buyers and sellers, economic values will eventually erode. Once that pattern is established, it becomes increasingly difficult to arrest the decline. Additionally, the documented conditions are such that they combine to create a physical and social context that is not viable for long term stability.

3.0 Reported Investment and Disinvestment Activity

Based on 2014 certified tax rolls, there were an estimated 111 residential property records with building structures (76 single-family and 35 multi-family) and a total of 35 vacant properties (7 vacant residential, 12 vacant commercial, 2 vacant industrial, and 14 vacant institutional). Homestead exemptions applied to 54 (49%) of the residential properties. In 2014, the total tax base in the study area was over $15 million.

Less than 8 percent of the structures in the study area were built in the last 20 years, with only 2 percent added during the last 10 years. The decline in the physical condition of many sites in the study area can be attributed, at least in part, to the age of the structures.

The city as a whole has seen a decrease in taxable value, the values associated with the proposed CRA depreciated at a higher rate than those of the city as a whole. The assessed value in the City of Clermont fell from $2,577,221,700 in the 2009 final tax roll to $2,328,260,688 in the 2014 final tax roll, which represented a taxable value decrease of 9.7 percent. The assessed value of the study area on the other hand fell from $19,290,108 in 2009 to $15,066,476, which represented a decrease of 21.9 percent.

4.0 Blight Findings

The following section outlines the blight factors present in the study area according to the criteria established under Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes and as outlined in the "Standards for Blight" section of this report.

Of the fourteen conditions indicative of blight listed in the Redevelopment Act, this analysis indicates that at least three such conditions exist in the study area and are retarding its immediate and longer term social, economic, and physical development. Below is a summary of the criteria that apply to the study area.

4.1 Assessment of "Substantial Number of Deteriorated or Deteriorating Structures"

The Redevelopment Act provides little specific criteria or guidance in Section 163.340(8), F.S. regarding the definition or attributes of deteriorating structures other than that implied. Florida Statutes focus on a series of indicators which in the aggregate are assumed to lead to economic, physical, or social distress. The representative examples of residential and commercial structures speak to the context of the Study Area and are functionally deteriorated and rendered functionally and physically obsolete in their current condition.

The infrastructure upon which the long-term economic stability of the Study Area depends is generally deficient, absent, or deteriorated beyond a level which justifies repair or maintenance. The *overall* conditions in the Study Area are such that they combine to create a context of functional and physical deterioration which is conducive to economic, physical and social distress. The conditions and circumstances documented in this report and readily observable in the Study Area evidence a "substantial number of deteriorated, or deteriorating structures" leading to economic distress which, in their current condition, are certainly capable of endangering life and property if not substantially modified, retrofitted, repaired, rebuilt, or redeveloped entirely.

4.2 Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions

An adequate stormwater system in the Study Area is lacking. Collector roads, especially in residential areas, do not exhibit curbs, gutters, or inlet systems to prevent flooding in the event of heavy precipitation. Where curbs and gutters do exist, they tend to be broken and/or overgrown with weeds and grass making them ineffective and causing accumulation of stormwater in roadways and driveways.

4.3 Predominance of Defective or Inadequate Street Layout, Parking Facilities, Roadways, Bridges, or Public Transportation Facilities

With the exception of a few limited areas, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and bike lanes are generally absent throughout the Study Area. With the absence of sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and bike lanes, the environment is not conducive for walking, jogging, or bicycling. Furthermore, other improvements, such as street light fixtures, pavement markings, and pedestrian signs generally are missing or are in need of repairs/upgrading. The absence of pedestrian transportation infrastructure is evidence of an inadequate transportation system in the Study Area.

In addition, a close examination of the residential neighborhoods shows the deteriorating conditions of many driveways in front of residential units. Paved driveways have broken pavement, while others are either unpaved or covered in gravel. Industrial and commercial properties tend to have asphalt from the right-of-way to the front of the building structure. There were very few industrial and/or commercial properties that had any balance of pervious surface and landscaping with a paved driveway.

The overall transportation conditions outlined in this report contribute to the disinvestment of properties along the roads.

4.4 Site Deterioration or Other Improvements

Many commercial and industrial structures are in disrepair and in need of maintenance, showing peeling paint, cracked or overgrown roads or sidewalks, and/or an unpleasant face on the street. Many of the residential structures also display signs of neglect, showing cracked stucco, broken and/or boarded up windows, overgrown and unkempt landscaping, and cracked or unpaved driveways.

The industrial area located in the eastern portion of the Study Area includes properties in disrepair including overgrowth, neglected damage to exterior walls, broken and/or boarded up windows, exposed dumpsters in rights-of-way, cracked driveways, unkempt dirt and gravel driveways and parking areas, abandoned structures, overall lack of landscaping, inadequate right-of-way and lack of sidewalks.

5.0 Conclusions

When compared to the City of Clermont, conditions of the proposed CRA expansion Study Area are indicative of blight as documented in this report. This review provides documentation of blight in the area, and through the Redevelopment Act, the area qualifies for assistance in redevelopment efforts and financing by expanding the boundary of the designated Community Redevelopment Area. Government maintained statistics coupled with staff field observation and documentation of the blighted conditions indicate the current conditions of the Study Area "are leading to economic distress or endanger life or property," according to the Redevelopment Act. The current conditions of the area impede the immediate and long-term physical, economic, and social development.

The information summarized in this report justifies the City of Clermont in acknowledging the described conditions and adopting the requisite resolution declaring the need for the rehabilitation, redevelopment, and conservation of the Study Area in the interest of public health, safety, morals, and welfare.

6.0 References and Sources

James Hitt, Economic Development & CRA Director (Meetings, emails and phone calls).

Lake County Property Appraiser, Tax Rolls 2006-2014.

US Census, 2010-2013 employment and population data

CITY OF CLERMONT

AGENDA ITEM

Meeting Date	
Tuesday, September 8, 2015	
Agenda Item Name	
Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Budget	
Requested Action	
No action required until October	
Staff Report	

In accordance with Florida Statutes, the Clermont Redevelopment Agency is considered a Special District, and is required to approve a budget. Any projects and budgeted items must be included within the CRA Redevelopment Plan. At this time the Plan is in the process of being amended, and there are projects that are part of the current plan, and the proposed amended plan.

The proposed CRA Budget includes the following projects:

* Streetscape - continuation of various additions (benches, Trash cans, bike racks, lighting, etc.)
* Signage - 8th Street & SR 50 entrance and wayfinding signage (part of City-wide program)
* Professional Services - engineering, design, appraisals, surveys
* Ground level parking lot at the NE corner of W. Desoto St. & West Ave.
* Public Restroom Building at City Hall Park area.
* CRA Incentive Programs:
  > Facade Improvement Grant Program
  > Building Code Assistance Program
  > Building Permit Assistance Program
  > Impact Fee Assistance Program

The current and proposed CRA Redevelopment Plans also allows for flexibility in various programs or projects and a budget amendment would be needed to fund any of those projects as they occur. Some of these are also included within the *Downtown & Waterfront Master Plan.*

Once the millage rate and budget are approved by City Council, the CRA budget will be presented to the CRA for final approval by resolution.

Additional Analysis	
Fiscal Impact Summary	

Fiscal Impact	**Fund Number and Description**	**Available Budget Amount**

Exhibits Attached (copies of original agreements)	