

NW 7TH AVENUE CORRIDOR
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT
AGENCY



ANNUAL REPORT



2022 - 2023

Miami-Dade County/Office of Management and Budget
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NW 7TH AVENUE CRA
Annual Report 2023

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION



WELCOME to the NW 7th Avenue Corridor Community Redevelopment Agency's 2023 Annual Report, a comprehensive overview of the transformative initiatives and impactful developments that have shaped the landscape of this vibrant Miami-Dade County community. In the pages that follow, we invite you to explore the dynamic progress and strategic interventions that have unfolded over the past year, reflecting our commitment to revitalizing and enriching the NW 7th Avenue corridor. As stewards of community growth, we have worked tirelessly to foster economic resilience, enhance cultural vibrancy, and create an environment where innovation and opportunity converge. This report encapsulates the collaborative efforts of stakeholders, businesses, and residents as we strive to build a more prosperous and inclusive future for all who call NW 7th Avenue home.

Daniella Pierre

A Community Redevelopment Agency, or CRA, is a public entity that finances redevelopment within focused areas. Under Florida law (Chapter 163, Part III), local governments can designate areas as Community Redevelopment Areas when certain conditions exist.

Pursuant to Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) of the NW 7th Avenue Corridor must file with its governing body, Miami-Dade County (County), on or before March 31st of each year, a report of its activity for the preceding fiscal year. This report includes a complete financial statement setting forth the assets, liabilities, income, and operating expenses as of the end of the prior fiscal year (September 30, 2023).

This report will be available for review in the Miami-Dade County Clerk's Office and online at: www.miamidade.gov/global/government/boards/northwest-7th-avenue-cra.page.



The CRA is a legal entity, separate, distinct, and independent from the BCC and tasked with eliminating slum and blight within the approved redevelopment area. Redevelopment endeavors are implemented through a public body, which is known as a community redevelopment agency. Community redevelopment agencies can utilize a designated funding tool, known as Increment Financing, which is available to cities and counties for redevelopment activities through the use of property tax revenues. Increment Financing is used to leverage public funds to promote private-sector activity in the denoted area or areas. The CRA completed its nineteenth year of operation in Fiscal Year 2022-23.

CRA BACKGROUND & HISTORY

Miami-Dade County is located along the southeast tip of the Florida peninsula, bounded by Biscayne Bay and the Atlantic Ocean to the east, Everglades National Park to the west, the Florida Keys to the south, and Broward County to the north. The total population served by the County is more than 2.7 million, including approximately 1.2 million that live in the Unincorporated Municipal Services Area (UMSA).

In accordance with the Community Redevelopment Act of 1969, the NW 7th Avenue Corridor Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was established by the County on March 16, 2004, when the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) adopted Resolution R-293-04, declaring the area to be slum and blighted, and authorized the County Manager to prepare a plan for the redevelopment of the Area in order to carry out the community redevelopment purposes of Chapter 163.

Additionally, Resolution R-780-04 and Ordinance 04-124, adopted by the BCC on June 22, 2004, approved the Redevelopment Plan (Plan) and established the Agency's Trust Fund, respectively. The CRA lies within UMSA in County Commission District 2 (Marlene Bastien).

N.W. 7th Avenue has historically been an important commercial corridor in North Miami-Dade.

Prior to the construction of Interstate I-95, Route 441, which includes all of NW 7th Avenue, was the main North-South highway connecting Miami to Atlanta. Although undergoing a period of decline in the 1960's and 1970's, N.W. 7th Avenue is poised to play an important role in the future of the Miami-Dade regional economy.

The Community Redevelopment Area Market Area – the 3-mile radius surrounding the Area, is a major regional sub-market. More than 483,000 people live within the Agency Market Area – if it was its own city, it would be the second largest City in Florida. The Area's Market Area is home to just over 9,600 business establishments, employing over 120,000, representing 12% of the County's businesses and 13% of its jobs base. 201,717 employed workers live within the Market Area, representing approximately 17% of the County's employed workers.

Total annual household income in the Area's Market Area is over \$7.5 billion, or 13% of Miami-Dade County's. The Area and its Market Area have continued to grow since the recession, expanding business establishments by 9%, paid employees by 20%, and total business payroll by 42%. Its growth has surpassed the County, which grew businesses by 10%, employees by 15%, and total payrolls by 28%.

The Area is home to a diverse mix of 396 primarily small businesses, which employ over 2,800 people, in retail, education, automobile dealers, parts and repairs, health care, and electronic and precision equipment repair and maintenance. Recent new businesses in the Area, some developed with the help of funding received from the Agency, included a green technology incubator, high-end print service company, personal health care products manufacturer, law firm, and a 200-room hotel. Magnus Media, Marc Anthony's global music production and talent management agency, is also a more recent CRA resident.

Many of the region's most important economic assets are within minutes of the Area, including: 1) 20 minutes of Miami International Airport and Free Trade Complex, 2) 23 minutes from Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, 3) 14 minutes from Miami/Opa-Locka Executive Airport, 4) 15 minutes from the Port of Miami, and 5) 22 minutes from Port Everglades.



CRA BACKGROUND & HISTORY

The Area borders Interstate 95 on its east edge; one of the most heavily traveled sections of interstate highway in the country. The Area is also extensively served by every mode of transportation, making it Miami's, and one of Florida's, most connected and accessible corridors. Further, the Area provides a considerable opportunity for development and job creation. The more than 70 acres of vacant and underutilized property within the Area can accommodate at least 1.3 million square feet of new development.

The Agency's by-laws establish the composition, purpose, powers, meetings notice requirements and administrative procedures. The by-laws, that established operating guidelines for the Citizens Board of Commissioners, were adopted by the CRA Board on July 13, 2009.

During fiscal year 2005, the agency negotiated a development agreement that would implement the primary redevelopment project, identified in the Plan as being a new automotive retail marketing, sales, and distribution center, commonly referred to as the "Auto Mall."

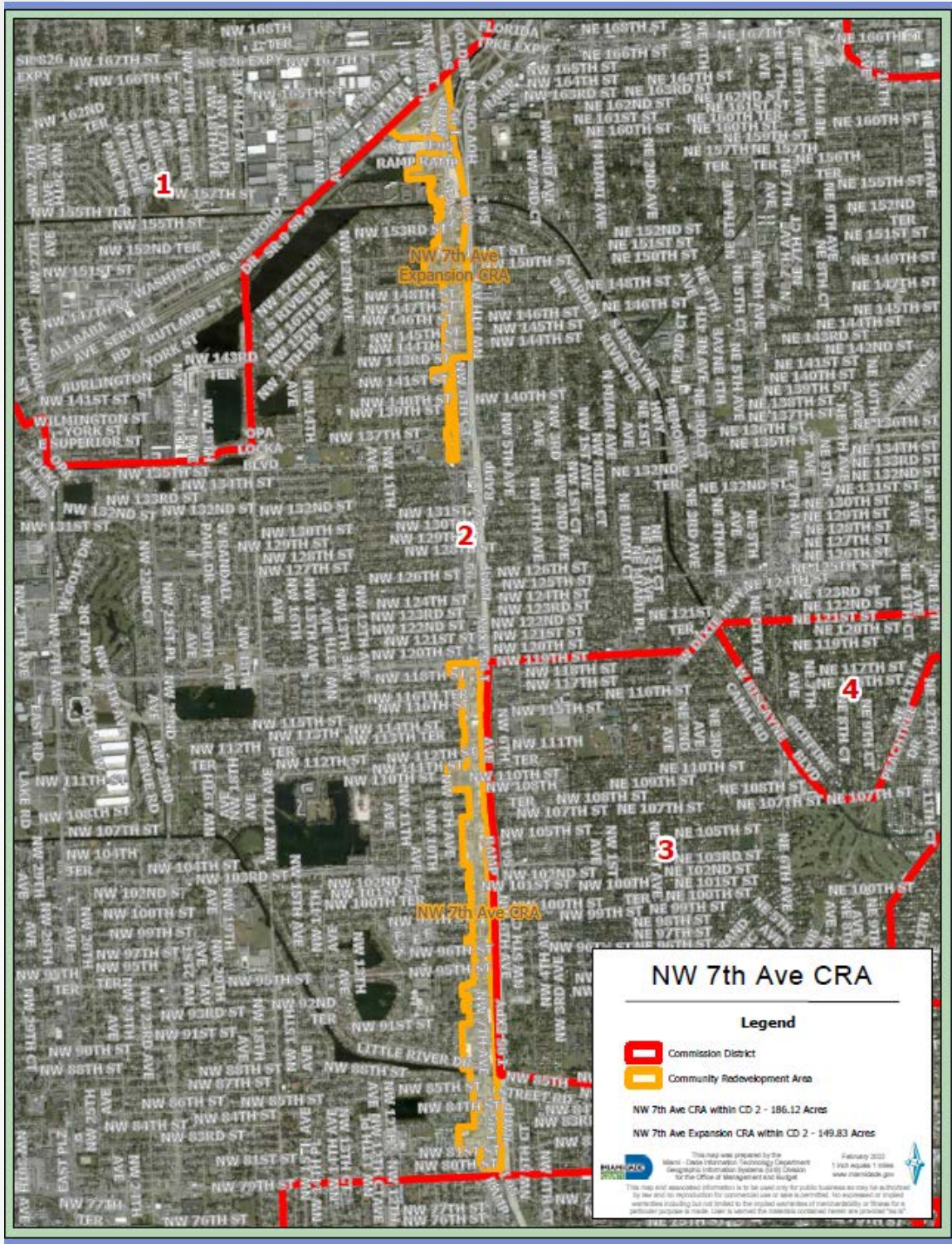
In early 2011, the CRA pursued an expansion Area to the north of the original boundary. On April 4, 2011, the BCC adopted Resolution 223-11 finding the proposed expansion area of the CRA to be blighted. The expansion area is generally bounded by the City of Miami Gardens on the north, City of North Miami on the south, on the west by the westernmost property lines of the parcels that abut the westerly right-of-way along NW 7th Avenue and on the east by Interstate 95. On September 6, 2012, the BCC adopted Resolution 661-12, accepting an amended redevelopment plan for the agency, and approving the expansion of the boundaries.

The redevelopment plan is the guiding blueprint for a CRA's work. It serves as a roadmap, outlining the specific goals and strategies for revitalizing a designated area. This plan typically addresses issues like blight, lack of affordable housing, or economic stagnation. It details the overall vision for the community's future and lays out specific projects, such as infrastructure improvements, business development initiatives, or public space creation. The plan can also establish financing mechanisms, often utilizing tax increment financing, to fund these projects and achieve the desired transformation. Regularly reviewed and updated, the redevelopment plan ensures the CRA's efforts are targeted, transparent, and aligned with the community's evolving needs.

As we look ahead, the Redevelopment Plan will be reviewed and updated as the community changes, resources increase, additional partnerships are brokered, and new projects are identified by the CRA.



CRA BOUNDARY MAP & REDEVELOPMENT PLAN



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS & ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFING

In accordance with Ordinance 06-18, adopted by the BCC on February 7, 2006, the CRA Board of Commissioners shall consist of not fewer than five (5) or more than nine (9) commissioners.

The CRA Commissioners during this reporting period were: Daniella Pierre (Chairwoman), Jeffy Mondesir (Vice-Chairman), Linnon Latham, Nadeige Thersias-Joisil (Secretary), Gene Lomando and John L. Gay, Jr. (Technology Liaison).

On May 5, 2020, Chairwoman Audrey Edmonson appointed John L. Gay, Jr. to the Board through Resolution 422-20. On April 4, 2023, due to time limitations, Mr. Gay resigned from the Board. On October 6, 2022, Commissioner Monestime appointed Linnon Latham and Nadeige Theresias-Joisil through Resolution 966-22. Chairwoman Daniella Pierre was appointed on October 8, 2022 (R-1133-22). And on November 15, 2022, Gene Lomando was re-appointed to the Board, along with Jeffy Mondesir, as the Vice-Chairman (R-1134-22). Therefore, as of September 30, 2023, five (5) of the nine (9) Board seats were filled.

The NW 7th Avenue Corridor CRA Board was staffed on a part-time basis by Miami-Dade County professional staff. Vivian Cao, Chimene Y. Graham and Nicole Jordan of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) led the County support team. Legal assistance was provided by Assistant County Attorney Terrence A. Smith.

During FY 2013-14, the CRA adopted a new Action Plan and began implementing several elements, including re-branding of the CRA (“Uptown Avenue 7”), marketing the re-branded CRA to businesses, and re-tooling one of the grant/incentive programs designed to assist businesses within the Area, as well as entice new businesses to consider relocating into the CRA.

Small firms have been engaged by the CRA to provide valuable “boots-on-the-ground” professional services in support of the CRAs Redevelopment Plan. The CRA grants administrator, selected in 2018, is Neighbor and Neighbors Association, Inc. (NANA), a local, well-established non-profit entity. The contracted firm responsible for coordinating business engagement experiences is the Miami Urban Contemporary Experience (MUCE), LLC, which was also selected in 2018.



INTERLOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT

On October 3, 2009, the BCC adopted Resolution R-1360-09 delegating the CRA certain redevelopment powers which had previously been vested in the BCC. Some of the terms of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement (Interlocal) were:

- Administrative expenses for the CRA are capped at 20% of each year's budget.
- The County is to be reimbursed annually for the cost of staff support, advertising, legal, publications and consultants.
- Approval by the BCC is required for amendments to the CRA Redevelopment Plan.
- Approval by the BCC is required for new indebtedness.
- One or more members of the BCC or other Miami-Dade County representative may be appointed to serve on the CRA Board of Commissioners.
- Annual budgets and progress reports must be submitted to the County. Except for debt service payments on existing obligations financed with tax increment revenues, no funds may be spent from the Trust Fund until the annual budget has been approved by the BCC.
- Community involvement and citizen input shall be obtained in the planning of redevelopment activities.
- An independent audit by a Certified Public Accounting firm is required annually and can be accessed at the following Miami-Dade County government website: <https://www.miamidade.gov/finance/library/CAFR2020-complete.pdf>, for the prior year.

TAX BASE GROWTH

The goal of the NW 7th Avenue Corridor CRA is the expansion of the property value base of the area to the maximum extent possible, through re-development strategies consistent with its adopted Redevelopment Plan and Action Plan. Tax increment funds are used for programs and projects which act as catalysts for redevelopment efforts by residents and businesses. Tax increment proceeds are deposited into the CRA Trust Fund. Interest earned by the fund and annual re-appropriations remain part of the CRA Trust Fund balance.

The base year (2003) taxable value for the original CRA Area is \$54,233,325. The base for the expansion Area (2012) is \$48,055,633. The 2022-2023 Preliminary Tax Roll within the CRA area as reported by the Miami-Dade Property Appraiser is \$291,509,310 reflecting a 184% increase over the base year taxable value. The 2022-2023 values reflect an 8.7% increase in the original area and a 21.6% increase in the expansion area from 2021-2022 values (\$193,387,099, original and \$66,831,409, expanded).

The CRA's FY 2022-23 budget of \$5,298,712, was approved by the Agency on April 26, 2023 (Resolution CRA-01-2023) and by the Board of County Commissioners on September 6, 2023 (Resolution No. R-750-23). FY 2022-2023 TIF revenues totaled \$1,147,266. Of this amount, \$335,437 was from the Unincorporated Municipal Service Area (UMSA) tax increment contribution and \$811,829 from County countywide funds.

FINANCIALS

Detailed below is a statement of revenue, expenses and changes in fund balances, ended September 30, 2022 and September 30, 2023.

Fiscal Years	2023	2022
General Revenues:		
Tax Increment	\$ 1,147,266	\$ 964,393
Investment and other income	<u>147,751</u>	<u>20,042</u>
Total revenues	1,295,017	984,435
General Expenditures:		
Community redevelopment	<u>663,441</u>	<u>689,668</u>
Total expenses	663,441	689,668
Change in net position	<u>631,576</u>	<u>294,767</u>
Net position beginning of year	4,131,444	3,836,677
Net position end of year	<u>\$4,763,020</u>	<u>\$4,131,444</u>

STRATEGIC PLANNING



During FY 2022-23, the CRA had discussions around the CRA’s primary goal of guiding redevelopment activities designed to return properties to their highest and best use and improve the economic vitality of the Area. The previous update of the “Action Agenda” will be replaced by a “visioning” document, spearheaded by the soon-to-be contracted economic development coordinator, which will guide the Board’s overall policy and programmatic decisions. Much of the Annual Report’s identified goals and initiatives from the prior fiscal years, remained intact for fiscal year 2022-23.

In 2023, the CRA designated the month of August, and each August thereafter, as *Black Business Month* by inviting local businesses to attend a CRA meeting. *Black Business Month* is celebrated nationally during the month of August, as a time when individuals and businesses recognize Black-owned businesses across the country. During *Black Business Month*, local government officials, community leaders, and venture capitalists are encouraged to focus efforts on supporting Black-owned businesses and creating a more hospitable environment in which Black-owned businesses can thrive. Supporting Black-owned businesses throughout the year can help stabilize a community and create more opportunities for meaningful savings, property ownership, credit building, and generational wealth, which helps redevelopment of the CRA area.

The CRA’s business engagement firm, MUCE, developed a companion website wherein businesses could directly interact and receive real-time information about all of the happenings and offerings of the CRA. This website is the direct result of business surveys and information received over the years. This auxiliary website, www.uptownavenue7.com, with an “I am Uptown” marketing tagline, provides basic information about the CRA, how the CRA works and its grant programs; engages the business community via social media; provides information on relocating into the CRA; has YouTube videos designed to help businesses understand CRA particulars, e.g., compliance requirements surrounding the receipt of the CRA’s funding; Area business profiles and gives companies the ability to schedule a one-on-one session with the CRA’s economic development coordinator.

For FY 2022-23, the CRA held meetings on the following dates:

- February 23rd (Introductory Board Training, via Zoom)
- April 26th
- May 24th
- August 2nd

Meetings scheduled for the remaining months were cancelled due to lack of quorum.

GRANT PROGRAMS

In Fiscal Year 2022-23, the Board and staff discussed the need to expand the grants programs and transition to an electronic-based grants system. For the upcoming year, the CRA will issue a new request for proposal which will solicit for an entity capable of revamping the grant offerings and evaluating the possibility of creating grant/loan options as well. The CRA will continue discussions with local businesses about the effectiveness of the CRA's grant programs through its business engagement with the grants administrator.

The CRA administers three grant programs:

- Commercial Improvement Grant Program (CIP)
- Business Innovation & Improvement Grant Program (BIIG)
- Emergency Grant Program (EGP)

The Commercial Improvement Program (CIP) was created to assist commercial and industrial property owners in upgrading their properties. In 2016, a \$200,000 CIP grant was awarded to rehabilitate and re-open a decades-old Holiday Inn® hotel in the Redevelopment Area located at 7927 N.W. 7th Avenue. After several years of major re-habilitation, the 174-room hotel successfully opened in time for Super Bowl LIV in February of 2020. Over the years, in order to assist more businesses in need of supplemental funding, the CRA amended the program to lower awards to \$50,000; with some exceptions taken on a case-by-case basis.

The CRA budgeted \$500,000 for the program in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-23 and eligible improvements for the grant program to include construction, painting, roof repairs, solar options, lighting, exterior signage, window and door replacement, awnings, parking lot installations, canopies and shutters, Americans with Disabilities Act enhancements and storefront restoration. There were no CIP grants awarded for this fiscal year.

For the upcoming fiscal year, the CRA has signaled a desire to transform the CIP into a true commercial and rehabilitation/beautification grants program; with a true business relocation grant and expanded categories of funding, targeting specific industries. For example, there may be more need for infrastructure and neighborhood improvement program grants than in prior years. In addition, the currently-in-progress Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Roads project, SR 934/NE/NW 79 Street, which traverses the Redevelopment Area, will improve capacity deficiencies/traffic operations and multimodal use along the corridor in order to address the historical congestion, future travel demand and address safety conditions. These road improvements have begun to transform the corridor and made navigating it safer for pedestrians and vehicles.

The Business Innovation and Improvement Grant (BIIG) was created to further the economic viability of established small businesses in the Redevelopment Area. Just like the commercial grant, the BIIG program is designed to retain existing jobs; enhance the skill level of existing jobs, create new jobs, expand sales revenue, improve competitiveness, or enter new markets, and improve operations, increase efficiency, and reduce costs and energy consumption.

The BIIG makes capital available to fund the purchase of technology upgrades, equipment, inventory, advertising and marketing. Technical assistance is also available to grant recipients, in order to assist businesses with becoming more efficient and competitive. For FY 2022-23, the CRA budgeted \$350,000 for the BIIG program. There were no BIIG grants awarded for this fiscal year.

As depicted in the chart below, since inception of the grant programs in 2014, the Agency has awarded a total of 79 grants for approximately \$2.5 million to small businesses within the redevelopment area.

GRANTS DASHBOARD

FISCAL YEAR	BIIG	FUNDING	CIP	FUNDING	EGP	FUNDING	TOTAL
2014-2015	7	\$66,508	6	\$254,300	-	-	320,808
2015-2016	8	80,000	6	599,600	-	-	679,600
2016-2017	8	53,834	4	265,000	-	-	318,834
2019-2020	5	48,000	3	215,000	1	3,500	263,000
2020-2021	8	72,625	5	250,000	6	21,000	312,625
2021-2022	8	80,000	6	26,000	-	-	340,000
TOTAL	42	400,967	30	1,843,900	7	24,500	2,244,867

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

The CRA will be looking to improve on their programmatic offerings in the following areas:

1. Update and expand the grant programs
2. Engage the services of an economic redevelopment firm to spearhead the CRAs transformation plans
3. Explore the feasibility of expanding the CRA boundaries
4. Create of a business relocation grant program
5. Revamp the auxiliary website to ensure a more business, user-friendly experience.

The CRA continues to search for a signature project consistent with their brand messaging and acquire a parcel of land for a meaningful development project.

Major goals targeted for the upcoming Fiscal Year include:

1. Acquire parcel of land or office building
2. Explore opportunities for P3 development project for affordable housing, co-work, and/or retail development deal

As it relates to affordable housing, the CRA did not complete any affordable housing initiatives during this reporting year. However, discussions to explore the feasibility of partnering with an entity via a public-private joint venture for a mixed-use component are on-going and expanding the CRA to include more residential properties was also discussed.

LOOK AHEAD

In summary, the Uptown Avenue 7 CRA is committed to eliminating blight and encouraging growth and development within the CRA district; to the benefit of all Area residents, visitors and businesses. This commitment guides its organizational goals; as evidenced by its Work Plan (programming and financial priorities). Where possible, the CRA seeks to leverage resources by partnering with outside organizations (contracted firms) whose activities contribute to the overarching mission and goals of the CRA. Administrative and operating costs were approximately 14% of the fiscal year 2022-2023 budget, allowing the CRA to apply the majority of its resources to grants, programs and activities that provide direct benefit to the Area.

For the sixth straight year, the tax roll in the Area increased at a greater percentage than the County-wide growth; which indicates that there continues to be a steady pace at which the prior CRA businesses have remained and new ones have chosen to relocate into the Area. This robust year-over-year growth of commercial leases will help to springboard the CRA into development agreements designed to stimulate further growth and expansion; as these projects can pay “dividends” to the Area by ensuring sustainable, long-term success—both within the CRA district and the County.

The primary challenges faced by the CRA are to continue attracting new businesses into the Area; retain the current businesses and the successful search for a development partner to create a project with the right mix of business, retail and affordable housing.

For FY 2022-2023, the CRA will continue to build on partnerships with the businesses and residents within the Corridor to further implement the goals and objectives outlined in the CRA’s Redevelopment and Action Plans through engagement with the community and all stakeholders. In addition, community redevelopment projects will be identified which may serve to increase and enhance the tax base within the Area.

The CRA will continue to implement programs and provide services which address slum and blight, build needed infrastructure, reduce crime, stimulate job creation and support the development of affordable housing.

Major goals targeted for the upcoming Fiscal Year may include:

- Acquire parcel of land or office building;
- Explore opportunities for P3 development project for co-work, and/or retail development deal;
- Re-vamp the CRA’s grant program offerings;
- Add a Community Policing/Solid Waste component;
- Expand the CRA’s business relocation efforts
- Continue partnering with local companies to spur employment opportunities for Area residents; and
- Continue engagement/outreach with the local business community.

We have laid the groundwork for continued growth and prosperity in our community. As we look ahead, we remain committed to our mission of fostering sustainable development, preserving cultural heritage, and improving the quality of life for residents and businesses along the corridor. With unwavering dedication and a shared vision for a brighter future, we are confident that the coming years will bring even greater accomplishments and opportunities for advancement. We look forward to the on-going partnership and collaboration of all of our partners: businesses, residents and visitors—as we continue to write the next chapter of progress together.

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