

NORTHWEST 7th AVENUE

CORRIDOR COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY



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ANNUAL REPORT

Pursuant to Chapter 163.356(3) of the Florida Statutes, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) of the NW 79th Street Corridor must file with its governing body Miami-Dade County (County) on or before March 31st of each year.

Detailed in the enclosed is a report of its activity for the preceding fiscal year.

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CHAIRWOMAN'S MESSAGE



Mae Bryant, PhD
Chairwoman

The N.W. 7th Avenue Community Redevelopment Area, and indeed, the entire world, has faced challenging times through the COVID-19 pandemic. Luckily, the CRA was able to do our part by offering assistance to our neighboring businesses. In order to encourage the continued operation of our small, medium, and large businesses, the Uptown Avenue 7 CRA Board approved an emergency grant program for qualified businesses in May of 2020.

Sustaining our businesses and by extension, the surrounding community—which make the CRA Area an historic and unique thriving center for culture and commerce—is critical to the recovery of our overall economy. The upcoming year will be one of re-building for the community and a re-dedication to the aims and goals of our CRA.

INTRODUCTION

A Community Redevelopment Agency 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 163.356(3) of the Florida Statutes, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) of the NW 7th Avenue Community 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, 2020).

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

CRA BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

In accordance with the Community Redevelopment Act of 1969, the NW 7th Avenue Corridor Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was established by Miami-Dade 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 County Commission Districts 2 (Jean Monestime) and 3 (Audrey M. Edmonson).

The N.W. 7th Avenue corridor has historically been an important commercial corridor in North Miami-Dade. Prior to the construction of Interstate 95 (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. Over 483,000 people live within the Agency Market Area; if it were its own city, it would be the second largest City in Florida. The Area's Market Area is home to just over 9,596 business establishments, employing over 120,000, representing 12% of the County's businesses and 13% of its jobs base.

Approximately 201,717 employed workers live within the Market Area, representing 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.

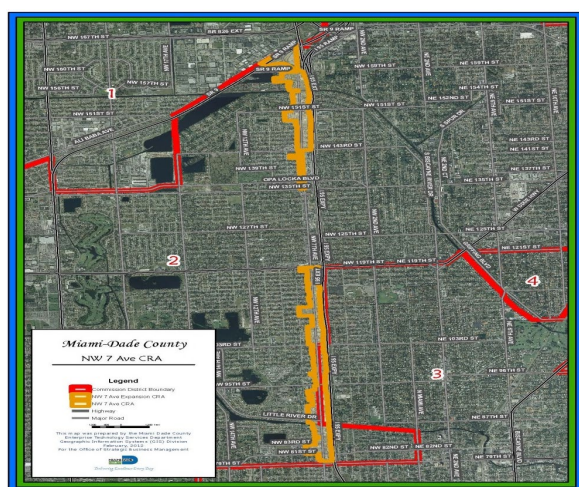
The Area is home to a diverse mix of 396 primarily small businesses, which employ over 2,800 persons. Recent new businesses in the Area, some developed with the help of funding received from the Agency, include a high-end print company capable of 3D printing, personal health care products manufacturer, law firm, a national chain 200-room hotel and Magnus Media, singer Marc Anthony's global music production and talent management agency.

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 fifteenth year of operation in Fiscal Year 2018-19.

CRA BOUNDARY MAP/REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

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 "AutoMall." However, on December 7, 2005, the developer, Potamkin development I-95 LLC, decided to discontinue negotiations.



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.

In order to assist the CRA with implementation of its Plan, the CRA has released a series of requests for proposals throughout the years. The most recent competitive solicitations were issued in 2018 and sought the

services of a grants coordinator, economic development coordinator and business engagement/ancillary programming firm.

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 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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: Dr. Mae Bryant (Chairwoman), Eugene Lomando (Vice-Chairman), Mack Samuel (Board Secretary), Charesse Chester (Board Marketing Rep), Yvonne White Edwards and John L. Gay, Jr.

On October 3, 2017, BCC Ordinance O-17-100, re-appointed Dr. Mae Bryant, Gene Lomando and Mack Samuel to their second terms. On March 6, 2018, Commissioner Monestime re-appointed Charesse Chester to the Board (239-18) for a second term. On February 4, 2020, Commissioner Monestime appointed Ms. Edwards and on May 5, 2020, Chairwoman Audrey Edmonson appointed John Gay as the newest Member to the Board. The appointments of Commissioners Edwards and Gay, lifted a previous 5-month dormancy, due to a lack of quorum. Therefore, as of September 30, 2020, six (6) of the nine (9) seats were filled.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFING

The NW 7th Avenue CRA Board was staffed on a part-time basis by County professional staff. Jorge M. Fernandez, Jr. and Chimene Y. Graham 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.

Several local, small firms are engaged by the CRA to provide valuable professional services in support of the CRAs Redevelopment Plan. UrbanCentric Analytics, Inc, provides economic development planning and implementation services. The CRA grants administrator is Neighbor and Neighbors Association, Inc. (NANA), a well-established non-profit entity. The contracted firm responsible for coordinating business engagement experiences and the annual culture festival is the Miami Urban Contemporary Experience (MUCE), LLC.

The services provided by the economic development coordinator include update of the Action Plan based on the Board's goals; real-time data collection and trend analysis; stakeholder engagement; implementation of the Plan; coordination with the grants and business engagement firms; and oversight of the CRAs annual Uptown Avenue 7 Festival which welcomes well over 2,500 visitors, businesses, and residents and is coordinated through the Office of Commissioner Jean Monestime.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

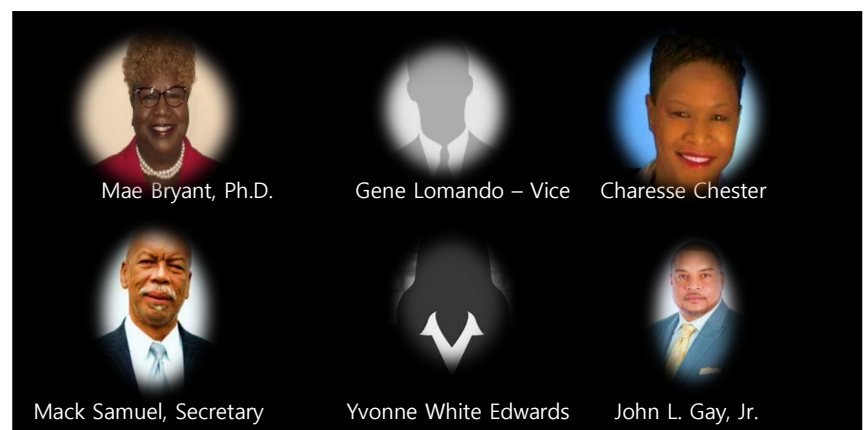
The Agency's by-laws establish the composition, purpose, powers, meetings notice requirements and administrative procedures. The by-laws, that established operating guidelines for the Citizens Board of Commissioners, were adopted by the CRA Board on July 13, 2009.

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/CAFR2018-complete.pdf>.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



TAX BASE GROWTH

The goal of the NW 7th Avenue 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.

The base year (2003) taxable value for the original CRA Area is \$131,292,949. The base for the expansion Area (2012) is \$493,525,205.

The 2019 Preliminary Tax Roll within the CRA area as reported by the Miami-Dade Property Appraiser is \$219,351,968 reflecting a 90 percent increase over the base year taxable value. The 2019 values reflect a 12% increase from 2018 values (\$198,957,885). The CRA's FY 2019-20 budget of \$2,897,696, was approved by the Agency on July 24, 2019 (Resolution CRA-04-2019) and by the Board of County Commissioners on November 19, 2019 (Resolution No. R-1228-19). FY 2019-20 TIF revenues totaled \$691,743. Of this amount, \$202,251 was from the Unincorporated Municipal Service Area (UMSA) tax increment contribution and \$489,492 from County countywide funds.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Detailed below is a Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances.

NW 7 TH AVENUE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY	
Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 2020	
REVENUES	
Tax Increment	\$691,743
Interest Income	\$40,384
Total Revenues	\$732,127
EXPENDITURES	
General Government	\$766,625
Debt Service	0
Capital Outlay	0
Total Expenditures	\$766,625
Excess/Deficiency of Revenues	
Over Expenditures	0
Other Financing Source	
Operating Transfers In	0
Operating Transfers Out	0
Total Other Financing Sources	0
Net Change in Fund Balance	-\$34,498
Beginning Fund Balance	\$2,660,202
Ending Fund Balance	\$2,625,705

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The CRA did not complete any affordable housing initiatives during this reporting year. However, discussions are underway to explore the feasibility of partnering with an entity via a public-private joint venture with a mixed-use component.

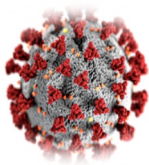
CRA STRATEGIC PLANNING

During FY 2019-20, the CRA continued strategic planning sessions to refine 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 CRA Board continued discussions related to securing a parcel for possible development. The previous update of the "Action Agenda," continued to guide the Board's policy and programmatic decisions. For obvious reasons, which will be explained in further detail below, much of the Annual Report's identified goals and initiatives from fiscal year 2018-2019, remained intact for fiscal year 2019-2020.

In January 2020, the World Health Organization identified and declared a severe acute respiratory virus, 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) to be a public health emergency crisis of international concern. While the federal government created the Coronavirus Relief Fund—established under the CARES Act 2020 to provide direct funding to states and local governments with a population over 500,000 and the State and Miami-Dade County also offered some relief—many small businesses required more immediate assistance.

Like all other CRA's across the State, NW 7th Avenue had to contend with a new reality and quickly adjust. Since declarations of emergency required the closure of non-essential business and residents to stay-at-home to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the Community Redevelopment Agency developed a \$600,000 Emergency Grants Program (EGP) to directly address the small business need for emergency funding for equipment purchases, mortgage and rental assistance and payroll support. The program provided funding for up to eighty-five \$7,000 emergency grants. The EGP was administered by the same firm which administers the CRA's regular grants program: Neighbors and Neighbors Association, Inc. (NANA).

"It is imperative that we quickly mobilize an effort to help the CRA's businesses remain intact and not slip into foreclosure, ruin or complete closure, as they are the backbone of not only the country's larger economy, but also the County's local economy," said Kevin Greiner, NW 7th Avenue CRA economic development coordinator.



The sudden and unforeseen closure of businesses have had a detrimental effect on many small and large businesses, including, but not limited to, those within the Redevelopment Area. The total economic losses are still being calculated, but have no doubt been exceptional and unprecedented.

While the initial goals will remain the same: build the CRA's TIF income; develop alternative funding for CRA programs and investments; develop alternatives to the State Enterprise Zone program; and support expansion and growth of local CRA businesses, the update to the Action Agenda, placed emphasis on identifying and completing a signature project or acquiring a parcel of land for development and continued brand recognition (i.e., streetscape standards and continued sponsorship of a cultural business/community festival).

For FY 2019, after re-establishment of a quorum, the CRA held virtual meetings on the following dates: May 6th; June 12th; June 26th; July 20th; and September 28th.

CRA GRANT PROGRAMS

Fiscal Year 2019-20, the Board continued discussions with local businesses about the effectiveness of the CRA's grant programs through its monthly meetings and business engagement series coordinated by MUCE. Due to the pandemic, the Board approved the addition of social distancing apparatus and PPE (protective personal equipment) as new grant categories.

The Commercial Improvement Program (CIP) was created to assist commercial and industrial property owners in upgrading their properties. The CRA budgeted \$250,000 for the program in FY 2019-20. In addition to the new Covid-19 categories, eligible improvements for the grant program include construction, painting, roof repairs, lighting, exterior signage, window and door replacement, awnings, canopies and shutters, and storefront restoration among other improvements.

In 2016, a 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 rehabilitation, the 174-room hotel successfully opened in time for Super Bowl LIV in February of 2019.

During FY 2018-19, 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.

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 expanded categories of funding and 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 will transform the corridor.

Fiscal Year	BIIG Grants	Funding	CIP Grants	Funding	Total
FY 2014 – 2015	7	\$66,508	6	\$254,300	\$320,808
FY 2015 – 2016	8	\$80,000	6	\$599,600	\$679,600
FY 2016 – 2017	6	\$53,834	4	\$265,000	\$318,834
FY 2019 – 2020	5	\$48,000	3	\$215,000	\$263,000
Total	26	\$248,342	19	\$1,333,900	\$1,582,242

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 equipment and inventory or advertising and marketing. Technical assistance is also available to grant recipients, in order to assist businesses with becoming more efficient and competitive. For FY 2019-20, the CRA budgeted \$150,000 for the BIIG program in the hopes of awarding at least 15 grants to deserving small businesses within the CRA corridor.

As shown above, since inception of the grant programs in 2014, the Agency has awarded a total of 45 grants for \$1,582,242 to small businesses within the CRA Area:

CRA ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS/WORK PROGRAM

The CRA's Work Plan was severely affected by the pandemic, as the Board's focus shifted to establishment of an emergency grants program to support the local businesses in the Area. However, the CRA was successful at achieving at least one of the top three priorities it had set for the fiscal year: installation of approximately 150 banner signs along the NW 7th Avenue Corridor span of the CRA Area. The banners prominently display the CRA's branding of "Uptown Avenue 7, iwork, ishop, iplay."

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

Major goals targeted for the upcoming Fiscal Year include:

- Acquire parcel for public-private affordable housing, co-work, and/or retail development deal;
- Expansion of the CRAs Business Development/Engagement Training Series;
- Partner with local Chambers and the workforce agency to sponsor employer outreach and Job Fairs; and
- Sponsoring a Virtual Culture Festival for the local business community.



LOOK AHEAD/CLOSING SUMMARY

In summary, the overall goal of the N.W. 7th Avenue CRA is to eliminate slum and blight in our redevelopment area through the implementation of the community redevelopment plan; foster dynamic and vibrant commercial and residential environments and expand economic opportunities in our community. Where possible, the CRA seeks to leverage resources by partnering with outside organizations whose activities contribute to the overarching mission and goals of the CRA.

While 2020 was a trying year for many reasons, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted communities and neighborhoods around the world and has proven to be more than a health crisis: it has affected every sector of life and business; society and economies at their core.

In March 2020, like most places of business, the NW 7th Avenue CRA essentially suspended normal operations to address the immediate and sudden needs of our Area's businesses by doing our part to help mitigate the economic impact of Covid-19 in the community. The emergency grant program, which was created to be used for rent, mortgage, payroll, inventory, emergency repairs, utilities, and insurance, assisted eligible Area businesses.

The CRA will spend the upcoming program year reaching out to and listening to our Area's partners, business community and residents to determine how best we can support them in building a bridge to "normalcy" for the economic recovery ahead. One aspect of that normality may be the evolution of the emergency grant program into a longer-term business recovery grant program. A recovery program, designed to assist businesses recovering from losses sustained during the COVID-19 pandemic and provide them a true opportunity to remain in the district, coupled with state and federal assistance, may offer the best chance at long term success. Such program may enable local businesses to expand their capacity by receiving digital marketing expertise and services needed to adapt to a new paradigm or expand their physical capacity at their establishment.

For the third 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. However, this upward trend may be interrupted by the pandemic; as some businesses closed either permanently or temporarily as a result.

Despite the pandemic realities, the N.W. 7th Avenue CRA still has the potential to benefit from new increases in residential and commercial developments throughout Miami-Dade County, especially in the urban areas adjacent to the CRA, brought about as a result of Covid-19. If new development and business leases are realized in the upcoming year, the CRA may benefit if the new development increases property values throughout the Area.

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 and/or signature project with the right mix of business, retail, and housing.

For FY 2020-2021, 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 CRAs 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. Continued planning and responsible financial management will remain the guiding hallmarks as we recover from the Covid-19 pandemic while positioning the CRA to deliver a better local economy through infrastructure improvements, safer neighborhoods, a more appealing urban area, increased job opportunities and targeted business training and support programs.



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UPTOWN
A V E 7 N U E
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The NW 7th Avenue Community Redevelopment Agency

