

FINANCIAL AND PROGRAM UPDATE

FY 2020-2021

Issue #17

ANNUAL REPORT



NW 7TH AVENUE CORRIDOR COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Fiscal Year Oct. 1, 2020 – Sept. 30, 2021

Pursuant to Chapter 163.356(3) 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. Detailed in the enclosed is a report of its activity for the preceding fiscal year.

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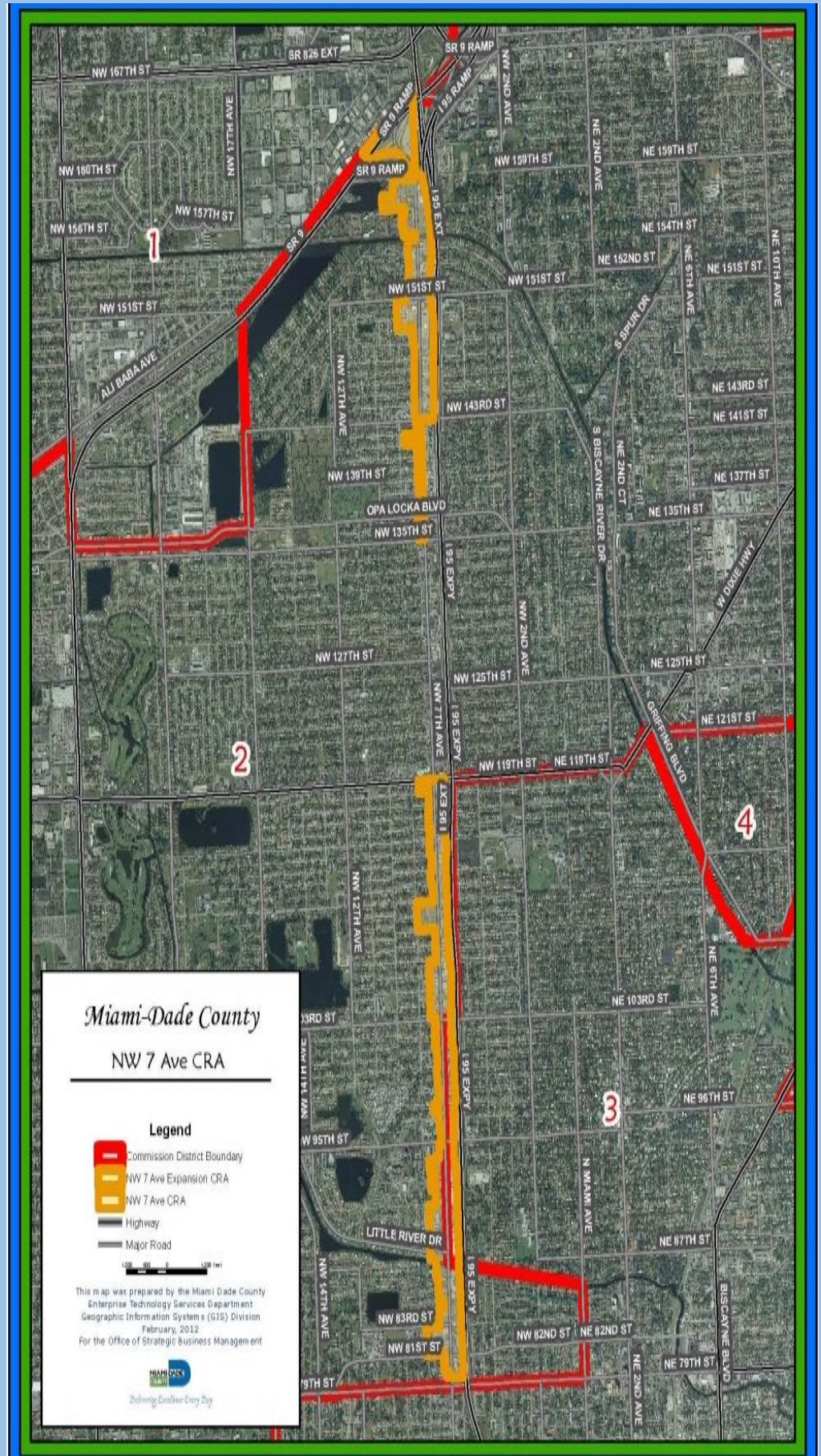
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CHAIRWOMAN'S MESSAGE



The pandemic has affected many sectors of business, life and work.

In spite of this, the N.W. 7th Avenue Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and our partners have continued to do the work: re-positioning the Corridor as a major regional employment center; providing support for the growth and expansion of existing businesses in the CRA; supporting development of new businesses in the CRA; providing increased employment opportunities for residents of Northwest Miami-Dade and redevelopment of the NW 7th Avenue corridor, through support of business and commercial opportunities.

For this reporting year, a new business website was launched ("I am Uptown"); another round of grants was awarded; and plans for an in-person return of our signature culture & arts festival was in the works. The CRA, *Uptown Avenue 7*, will continue to do our part in the building and re-imagining of the NW 7th Avenue corridor (one of the County's most traveled), to provide meaningful programming and support for our local businesses and surrounding community.

Dr. Mae D. Bryant

CRA BACKGROUND AND 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 2.8 million, including approximately 1.2 million that live in the Unincorporated Municipal Services Area (UMSA).

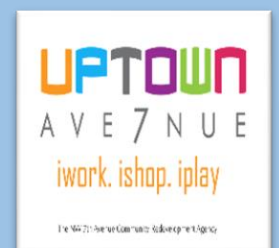
In accordance with the Community Redevelopment Act of 1969, the NW 7th Avenue Corridor Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was established by the County on March 16, 2004, when the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) adopted Resolution R-293-04, declaring the area to be slum and blighted, and authorized 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 Districts 2 (Jean Monestime) and 3 (Keon Hardemon).

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 rebounded and is poised to play an important role in the future of the Miami-Dade regional economy.

The Community Redevelopment 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.

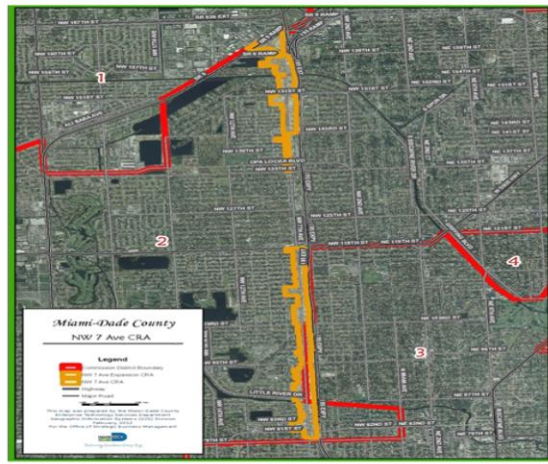
Approximately 201,717 employed workers live within the Market Area, representing 17% of the County's employed workers. Total annual household income in the Area's Market Area is over \$7.5 billion, or 13% of Miami-Dade County's. The Area is home to a diverse mix of 453 primarily small businesses, which employ almost 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, world famous singer Marc Anthony's global music production and talent management agency.



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.

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 seventeenth year of operation in Fiscal Year 2020-21.



The CRA Commissioners during this reporting period were: Dr. Mae Bryant (Chairwoman), Eugene Lomando (Vice-Chairman), Mack Samuel (Board Secretary), Charesse Chester (Board Marketing Liaison), Yvonne White Edwards (FDOT Liaison) and John L. Gay, Jr. (Technology Liaison).



Mae D. Bryant, Ph.D.
Chairwoman



Gene Lomando, BS
Vice-Chair



Mack Samuel



Charesse Chester, MA



Yvonne White Edwards



John L. Gay, Jr., MST

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. Yvonne White Edwards and on May 5, 2020, Chairwoman Audrey Edmonson appointed John L. Gay, Jr. as the newest Members to the Board. Therefore, as of September 30, 2021, six (6) of the nine (9) Board seats were filled.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFING/CONTRACTED FIRMS

The NW 7th Avenue Corridor CRA Board was staffed on a part-time basis by Miami-Dade 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 ("boots-on-the-ground") 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 primary 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 2,000 visitors, businesses, and residents and is coordinated through the Office of Commissioner Jean Monestime, District 2.

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:

- o Administrative expenses for the CRA are capped at 20% of each year's budget.
- o The County is to be reimbursed annually for the cost of staff support, advertising, legal, publications and consultants.
- o Approval by the BCC is required for amendments to the CRA Redevelopment Plan.
- o Approval by the BCC is required for new indebtedness.
- o One or more members of the BCC or other Miami-Dade County representative may be appointed to serve on the CRA Board of Commissioners.
- o 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.
- o Community involvement and citizen input shall be obtained in the planning of redevelopment activities.
- o 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 reappropriations remain part of the CRA Trust Fund balance.

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 2020-2021 Preliminary Tax Roll within the CRA area as reported by the Miami-Dade Property Appraiser is \$248,835,037 reflecting an almost 90 percent increase over the base year taxable value. The 2020-2021 values reflect a 13% increase from 2019-2020 values (\$219,324,968). The CRA's FY 2020-21 budget of \$3,625,756, was approved by the Agency on September 28, 2020 (Resolution CRA-06-2020) and by the Board of County Commissioners on March 2, 2021 (Resolution No. R-157-21). FY 2020-2021 TIF revenues totaled \$897,911. Of this amount, \$262,530 was from the Unincorporated Municipal Service Area (UMSA) tax increment contribution and \$635,381 from County countywide funds.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

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

NW 7 TH AVENUE CORRIDOR COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY	
Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 2021	
REVENUES	
Tax Increment	\$897,911
Interest Income	\$5,398
Total Revenues	\$903,309
EXPENDITURES	
General Government	-\$307,663
Debt Service	0
Total Expenditures	-\$307,663
Net Change in Fund Balance	-\$1,210,972
Beginning Fund Balance	\$2,625,705
Ending Fund Balance	\$3,836,677

CRA STRATEGIC PLANNING/PROGRAMMING

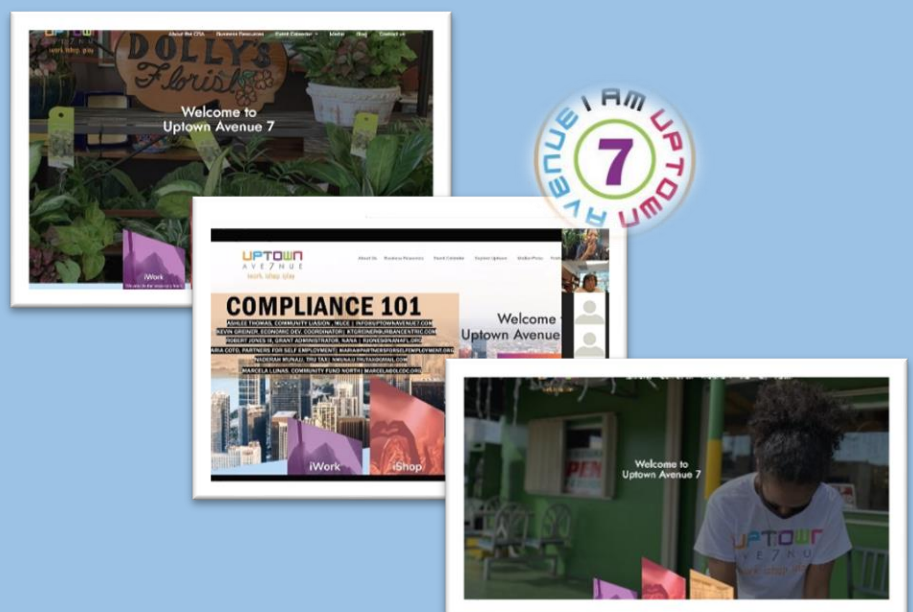
During FY 2020-21, the CRA continued strategic planning sessions to refine the CRA's primary goal of guiding redevelopment activities designed to return properties to their highest and best use and improve the economic vitality of the Area. With the continued disruptions, as a result of Covid-19 and the varying spikes in infections, the previous update of the "Action Agenda" continued to guide the Board's policy and programmatic decisions. Much of the Annual Report's identified goals and initiatives from fiscal year 2019-2020, remained intact for fiscal year 2020-2021 and the CRA Board continued discussions related to securing a parcel for possible development and seeking avenues to support its businesses.

Like several CRA's, NW 7th Avenue sought ways to support its business community following the initial Covid shut down. The CRA approved an Emergency Grants Program (EGP) in the prior fiscal year to award up to \$600,000 to directly address the small business need with purchase of equipment, mortgage and rental assistance and payroll support. The program would provide up to \$7,000 in funding for eighty-five businesses.

Fortunately, an analysis by the Economic Development Coordinator found that a fair number of the Area's businesses qualified for and received emergency funding through the federal government's Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) from the Small Business Administration.

Nevertheless, the CRA's emergency grant program (EGP), which was administered by the same firm which administers the CRA's regular grants program – Neighbors and Neighbors Association, Inc. (NANA) – provided grants totaling \$24,000. Other positives yielded from the administration of the EGP included the identification of new businesses within the Area in need of technical assistance and updated contact information for future economic engagement. In addition to the EGP, the CRA also approved thirteen construction/technology grants to Area business for \$312,000. More details are provided under the "CRA Grant Programs" Section, page 8.

Finally, the Board recognized the need for businesses to be able to interact with the CRA more directly. Therefore, the CRA's business engagement firm, Miami Urban Contemporary Experience, LLC (MUCE), which is primarily responsible for the annual in-person Culture & Arts Festival, pivoted and made plans to produce a virtual experience for 2021 and develop 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 from each of the prior year's festivals and activities. 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. There are currently 453 businesses within the Redevelopment Area, employing approximately 2,755 workers and generating roughly \$655 million in revenue.



For FY 2020-21, the CRA held one virtual meeting and two in-person meetings on the following dates: October 28th; April 27th; and July 23rd. Meetings scheduled for: November 19th, December 23rd, January 26th, February 23rd, March 29th, May 25th, June 27th, August 24th, and September 27th were cancelled due to Covid spikes.

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.



CRA GRANT PROGRAMS

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 2019. 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.

Fiscal Year 2020-21, the Board continued discussions with local businesses about the effectiveness of the CRA's grant programs through its monthly meetings and business engagement series hosted 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 CRA budgeted \$250,000 for the program in FY 2020-21. In addition to the new Covid-19 categories, other eligible improvements for the grant program 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. For the current year, the CRA awarded five CIP grants for \$250,000.

Fiscal Year	BIIG Grants	Funding	CIP Grants	Funding	Total Grants
FY 2014-15	7	\$66,508	6	\$254,300	\$320,808
FY 2015-16	8	\$80,000	6	\$599,600	\$679,600
FY 2016-17	6	\$53,834	4	\$265,000	\$318,834
FY 2019-20	5	\$48,000	3	\$215,000	\$263,000
FY 2020-21	8	\$62,625	5	\$250,000	\$312,625
Total	34	\$310,967	24	\$1,583,900	\$1,894,867 (58)

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 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 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 2020-21, 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. For the current year, the CRA awarded eight BIIG grants for \$62,625.

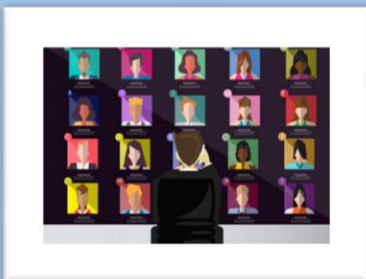
As shown above, since inception of the grant programs in 2014, the Agency has awarded a total of 58 grants for almost 2 million dollars to small businesses within the redevelopment area.

CRA ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS/WORK PROGRAM

Like many CRAs, the NW 7th Avenue's Work Plan was severely affected by the pandemic and Delta variant spikes. During the onset of the pandemic, the Board's focus shifted to programming designed to assist businesses.

Over the last year since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the CRA has:

- Established an emergency grants program to support the local businesses in the Area. (May 2020 - May 2021)
- Initiated a Business Engagement Series designed to involve local businesses in year-round CRA activities
- Assisted businesses with obtaining financial assistance available from Federal, State and County sources
- Awarded 5 CIP and 8 BIIG grants
- Established an auxiliary, more user-friendly website and banner renewals (www.uptownavenue7.com)
- Researched and communicated with businesses on various resources available to assist with County, State and Federal business assistance programs.
- Held monthly Zoom sessions providing information and guidance on applying for business assistance.



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:

- Acquire parcel of land or office building;
- Expansion of the CRAs Business Development/Engagement Training Series;
- Explore opportunities for P³ development project for affordable housing, co-work, and/or retail development deal;
- Continue partnering with local Chambers and the workforce agency to sponsor employer outreach and Job Fairs; and
- Sponsoring an in-person Culture & Arts Festival for the local business community.

LOOK AHEAD/CLOSING SUMMARY

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 2020-2021 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 fourth 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 with the right mix of business, retail, and housing project.

For FY 2021-2022, 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. 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.

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