



LAKE BUTLER
FLORIDA

Scenery, serenity and YOU!

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April 21, 2020

Mayor Sirmones and City Commission

Re: Public Hearing for Downtown Redevelopment (CRA)

In accordance with Florida statutes, a public hearing is to be held to discuss the Downtown Redevelopment Plan. The audit is presented as well as a five-year projected budget. It includes the capital improvement plan. The projections are based on conservative estimates.

One of the other requirements of the CRA is to complete ethics training each year. The Board of Directors completed this requirement as of 2019. The 2020 period, in light of the pandemic, is a challenge that may have to be done on-line.



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DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT FUND

Downtown Redevelopment Fund

In 1996 the City of Lake Butler recognized the importance of the downtown for the viability of the city. A Redevelopment Plan was developed with four objectives:

- Establish the boundary of the redevelopment area and create a redevelopment agency
- Assess the current status of the redevelopment area
- Establish goals and time frames for making necessary improvements
- Identify funding sources

The improvements in the Plan included sidewalk enhancements, water and wastewater facilities rehabilitation, park improvements, and general landscaping. Overriding purpose of the business development strategy was to bring new businesses to the area. The Redevelopment Plan is and was the starting point for improving the Lake Butler downtown area. As the community’s heart, it is the downtown that maintains the City’s pulse. Lake Butler’s heritage is preserved in its downtown which is historic and the symbolic center of the community. One of the first places a new resident, or would-be resident, visits is the community’s downtown. Is it clean? Is it cluttered? Is signage appealing and helpful? If the downtown looks well maintained and active, the image of the community will be viewed the same. The image of the downtown reflects upon the community. A vital downtown indicates a vital community; a community that is a good place to live and work but also has better odds of attracting new businesses and maintaining a strong tax base.

This fund is created as part of the Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRA) act. Annual ethics training for each board member has been accomplished. There are no administrative fees incurred within this fund. A public hearing was held in April 2019 and at that meeting the annual audited information as well as the projected activities over the next five years was presented. A new state law governing CRA’s requires the following information:

Downtown Redevelopment Board of Directors

Mayor Fred Sirmones

Vice Mayor Scott Cason

Commissioner Jimmy Beasley

Commissioner Annette Redman

Commissioner Jack Schenck

Union County Commissioner

Performance Measurements

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Annual Audit	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Ethics Training for Board	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Number of projects started	0	2	1	1	1	2	4
Number of projects completed	0	2	0	0	1	1	1

The various goals established in 1996 are still in place and updated but sadly have been neglected for years but are now the focus of the current administration. The objectives have been added to obtain the goal.

Downtown Redevelopment Fund

Goals for the Downtown Redevelopment Fund

1. *Goal: Overall redevelopment by establishing downtown Lake Butler as a focal point for the community and attract visitors from the entire region.*

Objective: Increase visual attractiveness and develop common theme **Completed by sweeping the streets, provide appearance of cleanliness, repaint city buildings**

Objective: Maintain, enhance, and encourage underdeveloped property.

2. *Goal: Increase the visibility, identity and unity of the downtown through physical design, promotion, uniform store hours and improved signage.*

Objective: Rebranding. New logo **Completed with help with a grant from the Department of Economic Opportunities**

Objective: Construct "Scenery, Serenity, and YOU!" signs

Objective: Mayor's Art Award to draw attention to the creative culture. **Completed the first art award at the July 4th celebration**

3. *Goal: Diversify economic base and the efficient use of land in downtown*

Objective: Encourage preservation and restoration of architectural buildings. **Working with the Historical Society and the State Historic Preservation department**

Objective: Encourage renovation

Objective: Increase and improve code enforcement. **Secured a new Magistrate to replace the former Code Enforcement Board**

4. *Goal: Create an attractive, safe and comfortable environment that is conducive to activities during the day and evening.*

Objective: Maintain City services for sidewalk maintenance and landscaping. **Replacing and building new sidewalks, adding palm trees in significant locations**

Objective: Encourage shade trees and other canopy features . **Obtained the Tree City USA status.**

Objective: Emphasize pedestrian safety

Objective: Eliminate blight and dilapidated structures **Demolished blight and continual to focus unsightly structures.**

5. *Goal: Shall aggressively develop, plan, finance and construct improvements to further the redevelopment of the downtown area.*

Objective: Create a loan pool by which the local banks and the redevelopment fund generate interest in a façade facelift. **Previous program had no interest.**

These goals were set in 1996 and a greater focus is being placed on the objectives to accomplish the desired goals.

Downtown Redevelopment Fund

Property Taxes

The City of Lake Butler has a tax increment financing district that covers the downtown area. The base year taxable value in the tax increment area was \$4,081,409. The 2018 taxable value in this increment area was \$8,374,084 and in 2019 it rose to \$8,587,564 which is a 2.6% increase. Previously, Union County has requested 50% of the taxes returned to the County to offset their operational services and the City has complied. Due to the fire at the Community Center, all funds have been used to bring that facility back to the show piece in the community that it is intended to be.

Projects:

Update CRA Master Plan – the master plan was created in 1996 and has not been updated since. As a master plan it should be updated at least every five years. The North Central Regional Planning Commission will do the study and \$15,000 is budgeted.

Streetscape – The Florida Department of Transportation will create a new streetscape for State Road 100 and to tie it with the entrance street to the Lakeshore Park a series of flower planters is proposed. The planters will be large and decorative so it will be very difficult to move and will ask the Women’s Club or some similar type organization to plant and maintain the flowers.

City Hall Directional Sign- a directional sign was erected by a citizen of the community and it is well designed. This project is planned to place a couple more signs in other locations to direct visitors to City Hall.

Retail Strategies – Continue into the second year with this firm to attempt to bring additional retail stores to the City. 2020 was the first year and it was handicapped with the Coronavirus Pandemic, so few retailers were planning expansions but focused on survival. It is planned that 2021 will be a year where retailers will be rejuvenated.

Future Projects

Parking Lot Stripping - is needed to be done at Lakeshore Park. The park gets a lot of use and the lines for vehicles to park is getting worn.

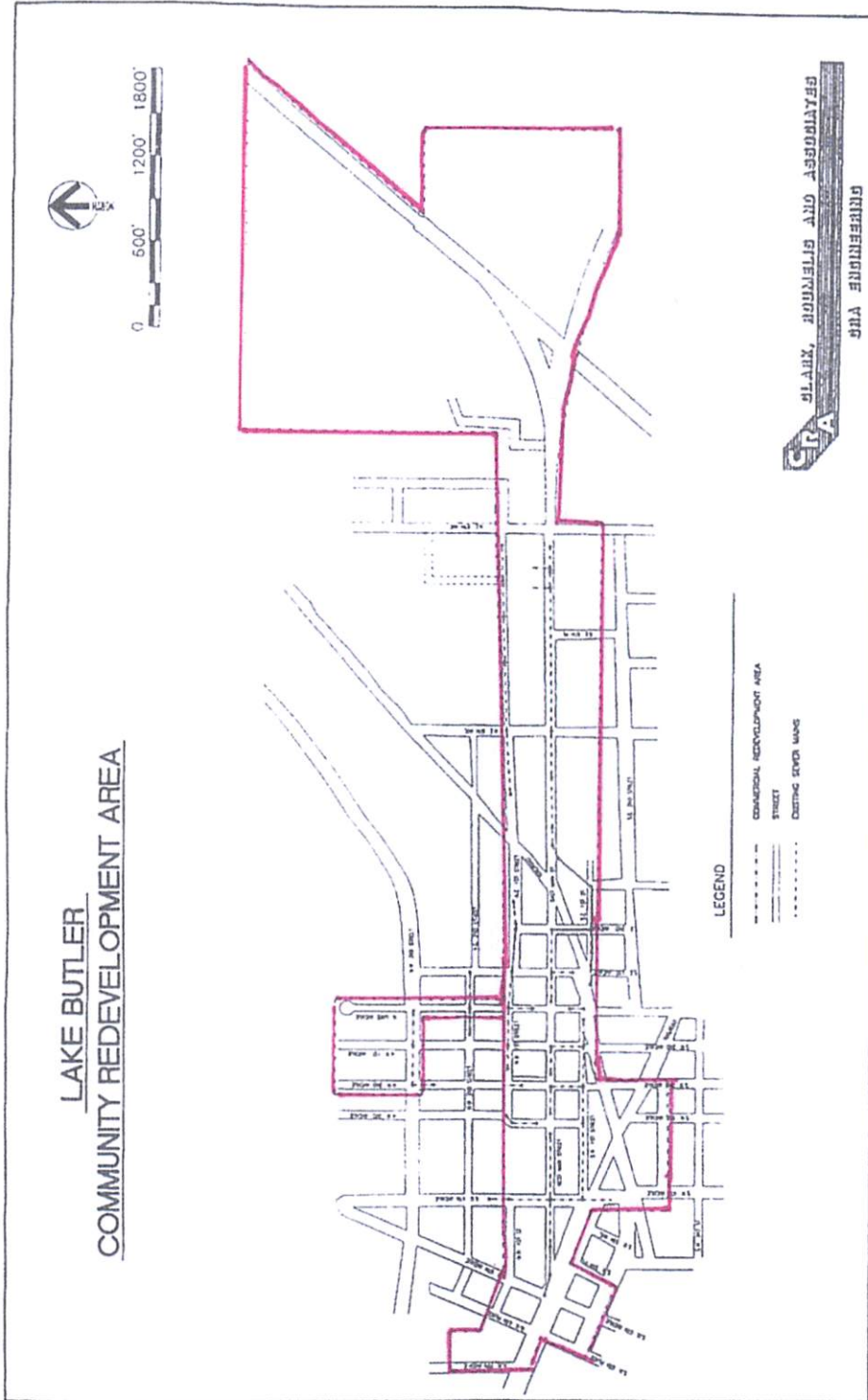
Park Trash Receptacles – Lakeshore Park needs to replace the makeshift receptacles with more presentable units

Brick wall at park – Replace the dividing piping currently used with a more modern divider

Banners on street poles – community display and holiday spirit are important and replacing the worn banners is going to help showcase the community

Music Pavilion – create a unique venue for groups to participate in various music or movie nights in the park area. This will get the schools, churches, and other non-profit groups involved to create a cultural center.

Downtown Redevelopment Fund

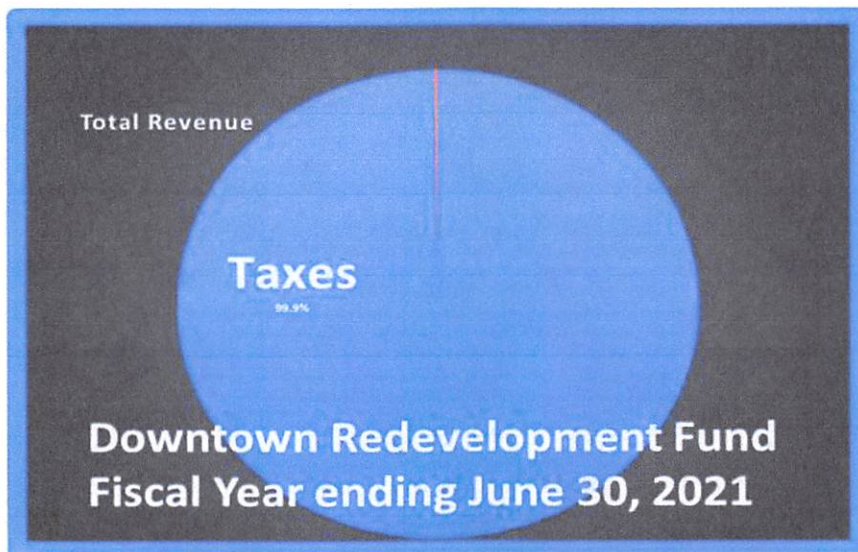


Downtown Redevelopment Fund

	Audited		Projection	Current	Budget
	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Revenues					
Taxes *	\$51,482	\$50,282	\$0	\$0	\$0
City	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
County	\$0	\$0	\$41,000	\$41,000	\$41,000
Total Taxes	\$51,482	\$50,282	\$51,000	\$51,000	\$51,000
Other					
Insurance refund	\$0	\$78,113	\$0	\$0	\$0
Transfer in	\$852	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Interest	\$658	\$67	\$100	\$100	\$100
Total Other	\$1,510	\$78,180	\$100	\$100	\$100
Total Revenues	\$52,992	\$128,462	\$51,100	\$51,100	\$51,100

* The auditors have combined line items

Revenues are generated from taxes in the taxing district established by the Downtown Redevelopment Board



Downtown Redevelopment Fund

	Audited		Projection	Current Budget	Budget
	2018	2019	2020	2020	2021
Expenditures					
Operating Expenses*	\$13,270	\$144,634	\$0	\$0	\$0
Audit	\$0	\$0	\$500	\$500	\$500
Projects:					
Seasonal banners	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0
Update CRA Master Plan	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,000
Streetscape	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000
City Hall Directional Sign	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,000
Capital Outlay	\$5,090	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Façade Improvement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Retail Strategies	\$0	\$0	\$29,500	\$29,500	\$29,500
Transfer out	\$2,764	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Expenditures	\$21,124	\$144,634	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$61,000
Excess of revenues over/(under) expenditures	\$31,868	(\$16,172)	\$11,100	\$11,100	(\$9,900)
Fund Balance- Restricted					
Beginning of the year	\$47,388	\$79,256	\$63,084	\$63,084	\$74,184
Restricted for projects					
End of the Year	\$79,256	\$63,084	\$74,184	\$74,184	\$64,284

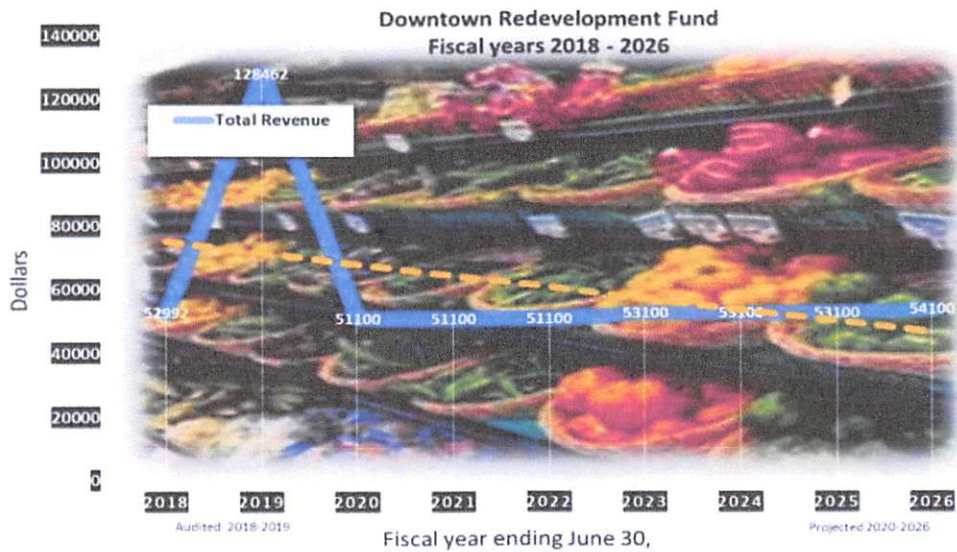
* The auditors combined the details making line item comparisons challenging

The City of Lake Butler has developed a five year projection of income and expenses as well as capital improvements or projects. The effort is to look at the areas of focus and revenues. The music pavilion is a large project and needs to start early and accumulate funds to develop. Grants will be sought but incase there are none or very little the budget is anticipating the activity. Revenues are projected to be relatively flat to reflect a conservative budget. If growth occurs as anticipated then additional revenue will take place but the expenditures are based on the flat projections. With no internal or administrative fees and following the Florida statutes, all funds raised are spent in the improvement of the downtown area.

Downtown Redevelopment Fund

Proposed Five Year Budget

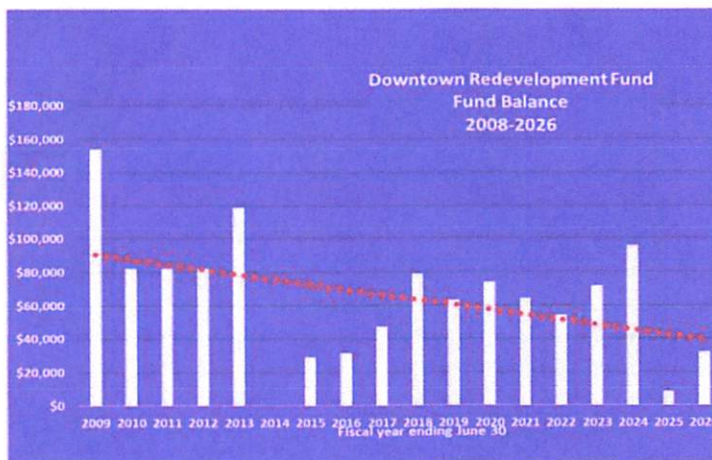
	Budget <u>2022</u>	Budget <u>2023</u>	Budget <u>2024</u>	Budget <u>2025</u>	Budget <u>2026</u>
Revenues					
Taxes*	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
City	\$10,000	\$10,100	\$10,100	\$10,100	\$11,100
County	\$41,000	\$42,900	\$42,900	\$42,900	\$42,900
Total Taxes	\$51,000	\$53,000	\$53,000	\$53,000	\$54,000
Other					
Grant	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Transfer in	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Interest	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
Total Other	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
Total Revenues	\$51,100	\$53,100	\$53,100	\$53,100	\$54,100



2019 spike in revenue was the result of a fire insurance reimbursement from the fire at the community center. The remainder of the years are flat. It is anticipated to apply for grants for the music pavillion. If awarded will be recorded as revenue but if not obtained then the fund balance will be used.

Downtown Redevelopment Fund

	Proposed Five Year Budget				
	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026</u>
Expenditures					
Operating Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Audit	\$500	\$500	\$600	\$600	\$600
Projects:					
Parking lot stripping	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Park Trash Receptacles	\$6,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Brick Wall at park	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Banners on street poles	\$0	\$15,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Plan/design music pavillion	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	\$0	\$0
Façade Improvement	\$0	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Retail Strategies	\$29,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Construct music pavillion	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$120,000	\$10,000
Total Expenditures	\$61,000	\$35,500	\$50,600	\$140,600	\$30,600
Excess of revenues over/(under) expenditures					
	(\$9,900)	\$17,600	\$2,500	(\$87,500)	\$23,500
Fund Balance Restricted					
Beginning of the year	\$64,284	\$54,384	\$93,484	\$95,984	\$8,484
Restricted for projects					
End of the Year	\$54,384	\$71,984	\$95,984	\$8,484	\$31,984



Downtown Redevelopment Fund



Before and after downtown area. The above photo is around 1920's and the photo below are the same as in 2020. The same area reflects the only remaining building that is now the historical society on the upper floors and offices on the lower floor. Paved highways and vehicles replaced the gravel streets with horse drawn buggies.

