City of Stuart

AGENDA

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
NOVEMBER 25, 2024
AT 4:00 PM
COMMISSION CHAMBERS
121 SW FLAGLER AVE.
STUART, FLORIDA 34994

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
Chair - Campbell Rich
Board Member - Eula R. Clarke
Board Member - Christopher Collins
Board Member - Laura Giobbi
Board Member - Sean Reed
Board Member - Tom Campenni
Board Member - Mark Brechbill

ADMINISTRATIVE
City Manager, Michael J. Mortell
City Attorney, Lee J. Baggett
CRA Executive Director, Pinal Gandhi-Savdas
City Clerk, Mary R. Kindel

Agenda items are available on our website at http://www.cityofstuart.us
Phone: (772) 288-5306. Fax: (772) 288-5305. E-mail: mkindel@ci.stuart.fl.us

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), anyone who needs a special accommodation to attend this meeting should contact the City's ADA coordinator at 772-288-5306 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting, excluding Saturday and Sunday.

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, he will need a record of the proceeding, and that for such purpose he 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 to be based.

(RC) next to an item denotes there is a City Code requirement for a Roll Call vote.
(QJ) next to an item denotes that it is a quasi-judicial matter or public hearing.

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC (Non-Agenda Related) (3 Minutes Max.)

COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS (Non-Agenda Items)

ACTION ITEMS

1. CRA BUDGET AMENDMENT #02-2025 - MEMORIAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS PHASE 4 (RC):

RESOLUTION No. 15-2024 CRA; A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA) OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING BUDGET AMENDMENT #02 TO THE FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2025 CRA BUDGET; APPROPRIATING AND AUTHORIZING THE EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR MEMORIAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS PHASE 4; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

2. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT REIMBURSEMENT GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES (RC):

RESOLUTION No. 12-2024 CRA; A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING AN AMENDMENT TO THE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM (BIRP) CRITERIA, EVALUATION MATRIX, AND CLARIFICATION TO PROGRAM GUIDELINES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

3. COMMERCIAL LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT REIMBURSEMENT GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES (RC):

RESOLUTION No. 13-2024 CRA; A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING A COMMERCIAL PROPERTY LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM WITHIN THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

STAFF UPDATE

ADJOURNMENT

WHAT IS CIVILITY? Civility is caring about one's identity, needs and beliefs without degrading someone else's in the process. Civility is more than merely being polite. Civility requires staying "present" even with those persons with whom we have deep-rooted and perhaps

strong disagreements. It is about constantly being open to hear, learn, teach and change. It seeks common ground as a beginning point for dialogue. It is patience, grace, and strength of character. Civility is practiced in our City Hall.

PUBLIC COMMENT: If a member of the public wishes to comment upon ANY subject matter, including quasi-judicial matters, please submit a Request to Speak form. These forms are available in the back of the Commission Chambers, and should be given to the City Clerk prior to introduction of the item number you would like to address.

CONSENT CALENDAR: Those matters included under the Consent Calendar are self-explanatory, non-controversial, and are not expected to require review or discussion. All items will be enacted by one motion. If discussion on an item is desired by any City Commissioner that item may be removed by a City Commissioner from the Consent Calendar and considered separately. If an item is quasi-judicial it may be removed by a Commissioner or any member of the public from the Consent Calendar and considered separately.

QUASI-JUDICIAL HEARINGS: Some of the matters on the Agenda may be "quasi-judicial" in nature. City Commissioners will disclose all ex-parte communications, and may be subject to voir dire by any interested party regarding those communications. All witnesses testifying will be "sworn" prior to their testimony. However, the public is permitted to comment without being sworn. Unsworn testimony will be given appropriate weight and credibility by the City Commission.

CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA
AGENDA ITEM REQUEST
Community Redevelopment Agency

Meeting Date: 11/25/2024 **Prepared by:** Michael Mortell, Pinal Gandhi-Savdas

Title of Item:
CRA BUDGET AMENDMENT #02-2025 - MEMORIAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS PHASE 4 (RC):

RESOLUTION No. 15-2024 CRA; A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA) OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING BUDGET AMENDMENT #02 TO THE FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2025 CRA BUDGET; APPROPRIATING AND AUTHORIZING THE EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR MEMORIAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS PHASE 4; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Summary Explanation/Background Information on Agenda Request:
The City has been programming the improvements to Memorial Park since 2009. The current phase of the park was delayed due to issues with procurement when the Contractor that was originally awarded the project refused to sign the contract unless the City paid an additional sum of $150,000 dollars to cover the increased costs associated with using ARPA funds. By the time the issue was resolved and the City could go through the procurement procedure again, the CRA budget was already complete and the funding for the CRA matching portion was not included. The CRA has sufficient funds available and this completion of the park has been a City priority for approximately 15 years. The details of the project are in the City Commission agenda item awarding the bid to the Contractor also scheduled for November 25, 2024. If the City does not move forward on the improvements, it will be required to return over 1 million dollars in ARPA funds that will no longer be available in the futre.

Funding Source:
Memorial Park Improvements Phase 4

FROM: CRA Fund Balance - $1,078,483.14

TO: Memorial Park Improvements Phase 4 - $1,078,483.14

Recommended Action:
Approve the budget Amendment by adopting Resolution No. 15-2024 CRA.

ATTACHMENTS:
1. R15-2024 CRA - Budget Amendment #02-2025 - Memorial Park Phase 4

BEFORE THE CITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA

RESOLUTION NUMBER 15-2024 CRA

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA) OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING BUDGET AMENDMENT #02 TO THE FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2025 CRA BUDGET; APPROPRIATING AND AUTHORIZING THE EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR MEMORIAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS PHASE 4; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

* * * * *

WHEREAS, the CRA Board adopts a balanced budget annually for Revenues and Appropriations as part of the FY Operating Budget which is intended to provide for the general operations of the CRA; and

WHEREAS, the CRA monitors and reviews the progress of operating budget throughout the fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the CRA from time to time identifies shortfalls for CRA programs and projects, and therefore, must amend the budget to accommodate these various programs and projects.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CRA OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA that:

SECTION 1: The CRA of the City of Stuart hereby authorizes a FY 2025 budget amendment as follows:

Memorial Park Improvements Phase 4

FROM: CRA Fund Balance - $1,078,483.014

TO: Memorial Park Improvements Phase 4 - $1,078,483.14

SECTION 2: If any resolution(s), or parts of a resolution(s), are in conflict herewith, this Resolution shall control to the extent of the conflicting provisions.

SECTION 3: The provisions of this Resolution are intended to be severable. If any part of this Resolution is determined to be void or is declared illegal, invalid, or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Resolution shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 4: This resolution shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

Board Member _____ offered the foregoing resolution and moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by the Board Member _____ and upon being put to a roll call vote, the vote was as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
CAMPBELL RICH, CHAIRPERSON				
EULA R. CLARKE, BOARD MEMBER				
CHRISTOPHER COLLINS, BOARD MEMBER				
LAURA GIOBBI, BOARD MEMBER				
SEAN REED, BOARD MEMBER				
TOM CAMPENNI, EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBER				
MARK BRECHBILL, EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBER				

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2024.

ATTEST:

MARY KINDEL CITY CLERK	CAMPBELL RICH CHAIRPERSON

APPROVED AS TO FORM
AND CORRECTNESS:

LEE J. BAGGETT, ESQ
CITY ATTORNEY

CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA
AGENDA ITEM REQUEST
Community Redevelopment Agency

Meeting Date: 11/25/2024 **Prepared by:** Jordan Pinkston

Title of Item:
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT REIMBURSEMENT GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES (RC):

RESOLUTION No. 12-2024 CRA; A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING AN AMENDMENT TO THE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM (BIRP) CRITERIA, EVALUATION MATRIX, AND CLARIFICATION TO PROGRAM GUIDELINES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Summary Explanation/Background Information on Agenda Request:
COMMUNITY REDEVLOPMENT BOARD

On October 1, 2024, the Community Redevelopment Board was presented the proposed amendments to the Business Improvement Reimbursement Grant Program Guidelines. The board recommended approval to implement the revised program guidelines. Other items discussed at the meeting were as follows:

- Create a loan program for businesses to purchase or improve their property
- Phase out language that promotes asphalt parking lots to encourage pervious surfaces

On November 5, 2024 the Community Redevelopment Board motioned to approve Resolution No. 12-2024 CRA to amend the Business Improvement Grant Program guidelines.

SUMMARY

The intent of the Business Improvement Grant Program is to further the CRA Plan objectives to eliminate blight by assisting property and business owners in the redevelopment of existing buildings and site improvements within the CRA, improve property values by creating an aesthetically attractive frontage that is inviting and improves visitors' experiences, and stimulates private investment.

This item was presented to the Community Redevelopment Board on June 4, 2024, and the Community Redevelopment Agency on June 24, 2024. The Board discussed and deliberated regarding the BIRP Guidelines and suggested removing the landscape requirements, restrictions for awning replacement, and broadening the overall scope of eligible improvements. The Board also recommended creating a separate landscaping program that would focus on bringing commercial properties into compliance with the City's Landscape Code, where feasible, and would be offered year-round. The staff has developed a separate Commercial Property Landscape Improvement Program that will address landscaping and irrigation, which will be discussed as a separate agenda item.

The Community Redevelopment Board and Community Redevelopment Agency advised staff to further amend the current Business Improvement Grant Program guidelines. The program should be designed to support revitalization efforts to reduce blight and improve the appearance of building facades that will have an impact on the value of the property and marketability of the surrounding area. Staff has made amendments to the agreement that reflect the intent of the program’s mission and has been successful in

past years for the City's businesses.

There are other cities and counties in Florida that offer a similar program to support facade improvements as part of their economic development initiatives to revitalize commercial properties, attract businesses and enhance the aesthetic appeal of the downtown area, special districts, and commercial areas. Staff is hopeful that the proposed guidelines will ensure the success of the Business Improvement Reimbursement Program (BIRP) program and encourage applicants to apply.
Staff is looking for feedback on program guidelines, eligible improvements, and amendments to the program to meet the CRA Plan objectives.

BACKGROUND

The Property Improvement Program Grant was launched in 2009 to encourage visible, exterior improvements to commercial and residential properties in the CRA. The grant program provided a matching grant of up to $4,000 per property. The grant was eligible for improvements such as windows, doors, signage, landscaping, roofing, architecture, streetscaping, parking lots, decorative shutters, and other improvements. The program had successful applications for projects including signs, awnings, new windows, landscaping, architectural design, roof repairs, porch enclosures, and driveways.

The program was amended in 2016/2017 and renamed to Business Improvement Reimbursement Program (BIRP). The program provided a reimbursement grant of up to $10,000 per property to match private funds. The grant was available to commercial businesses for exterior improvements that enhanced the property with improvements including window and door replacements, decorative shutters, signage, landscaping, parking lots/driveways, streetscape (benches, shade trees, bike racks), architecture (addition of balconies, porches, or arcades), and other exterior facade improvements were considered on a case-by-case basis.

The Program was amended in 2018 to replace eligible exterior improvements from "exterior signage" to "replacement of non-confirming pole signs to conforming freestanding or monument signs" to encourage and provide financial support for bringing exterior signage into compliance with the City's Land Development Code and enhance the appearance of the property.

At the direction of the Board, the program was significantly amended in 2021 to encourage commercial property owners to upgrade landscaping on private property and bring it into compliance with the City's Landscape Code, where feasible, since many of the properties within the CRA were constructed prior to the adoption of the Code. The amendment encourages property owners to upgrade landscaping to enhance the visible appearance of the property and provide shade along streets. We strongly encourage these improvements along the perimeter property lines that abut the public rights-of-way and interior parking lots.

Also, the evaluation matrix was amended to further encourage the property owners to provide landscape improvements as part of the overall site improvements and restricts funding for improvements such as replacement of windows and doors, replacement of existing awnings, exterior painting and lighting, and decorative shutters. These improvements are eligible for funding only as part of a more comprehensive site improvement.

The CRA continues to make outreach efforts to promote the program, which includes distributing an electronic newsletter to the City's contact list, distributing flyers to local businesses, mailing postcards to local business owners, and social media outlets such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram.

Funding Source:
The CRB and CRA Board approve $50,000 in CRA TIF funding each fiscal year for the program.

Recommended Action:

Motion to approve Resolution No. 12-2024 CRA to amend the Business Improvement Grant Program guidelines.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. R12-2024 CRA - Amendment to BIRP Guidelines
2. EXHIBIT A: Business Improvement Reimbursement Grant Program_GUIDELINES
3. Business Improvement Reimbursement Grant Program_APPLICATION
4. Business Improvement Reimbursement Grant Program_EVALUATION CRITERIA
5. Business Improvement Reimbursement Grant Program_REIMBURSEMENT FORM
6. CRA Map
7. CRA_BIRP - Priority Area Map
8. CRB Minutes 10-01-2024
9. CRB Minutes 11-05-2024

BEFORE THE CITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA

RESOLUTION No. 12-2024 CRA

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING AN AMENDMENT TO THE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM (BIRP) CRITERIA, EVALUATION MATRIX, AND CLARIFICATION TO PROGRAM GUIDELINES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

* * * * *

WHEREAS, the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Stuart has approved an implementation of the Business Improvement Reimbursement Program for commercial businesses within the Stuart Community Redevelopment Area; and

WHEREAS, specific guidelines were adopted for the Business Improvement Reimbursement Program; and

WHEREAS, guidelines are reviewed periodically to evaluate its effectiveness in the Community Redevelopment Area; and

WHEREAS, the objective of the Business Improvement Reimbursement Program is to promote commercial vitality, increase economic activity, and improve property values by encouraging private investment in exterior renovations that enhances the overall attractiveness of the community; and

WHEREAS, the existing guidelines of the Business Improvement Reimbursement Program encourages the property owners to upgrade landscaping on private property to improve the appearance and bringing the property in compliance with the current landscape regulations; and

WHEREAS, due to space constraints on a site in urban areas, implementing landscaping regulations and integrating landscaping to comply with City's Land Development Code on existing site can be challenging; and

WHEREAS, the goal of the program should be to incentivize property owners to comprehensively enhance the façade of commercial buildings and add aesthetic elements to enhance the appearance of property; and

WHEREAS, the program should be designed to support revitalization efforts to reduce blight and improve the appearance of building facades that will have an impact on the value of the property and marketability of the surrounding area.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA that:

SECTION 1: The foregoing recitals are hereby ratified and incorporated herein.

SECTION 2: The Stuart Community Redevelopment Agency has determined that the amendment to the program guidelines, as attached hereto as **"Exhibit A",** is in the best interest of the Community Redevelopment Area. Therefore, the amendment is authorized.

SECTION 3: If any resolution(s), in whole or part, are in conflict herewith, this Resolution shall control to the extent of the conflicting provisions.

SECTION 4: This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

Board Member _____ offered the foregoing resolution and moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Board Member _____ and upon being put to a roll call vote, the vote was as follows: vote was as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
CAMPBELL RICH, CHAIRPERSON				
EULA R. CLARKE, BOARD MEMBER				
CHRISTOPHER COLLINS, BOARD MEMBER				
LAURA GIOBBI, BOARD MEMBER				
SEAN REED, BOARD MEMBER				
TOM CAMPENNI, EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBER				
MARK BRECHBILL, EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBER				

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2024.

ATTEST:

_____
MARY KINDEL
CITY CLERK

_____
CAMPBELL RICH
CHAIRPERSON

APPROVED AS TO FORM
AND CORRECTNESS:

_____
LEE J. BAGGETT, ESQ
CITY ATTORNEY

Community Redevelopment Agency

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

GUIDELINES

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The City of Stuart Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Business Improvement Reimbursement Program is an incentive program designed to encourage visible, exterior improvements to commercial businesses in the Stuart Community Redevelopment Area.

The intent of the program is to promote commercial vitality, increase economic activity, and improve property values by encouraging private investment in exterior renovations that enhances the overall attractiveness of the community. The program will provide financial assistance to existing businesses in the form of a grant intended to reduce the costs for exterior improvements that result in more visually appealing commercial properties in accordance with the Stuart Community Redevelopment Plan.

The grant program provides a reimbursement grant of up to $10,000 of public funds per property to match private funds to pay for the design and completion of property improvements. The grant shall be available on a dollar-to-dollar match (for every dollar the grantee puts in, the Stuart CRA will put in one dollar) for commercial businesses which may qualify for a reimbursement of 50% of the applicant's total project costs up to $10,000.

The grant cycle will open on_____-_____ and close on_____. To be eligible for consideration, applicant must submit a completed application by 5 PM on _____, at the City Hall, CRA office located at 121 SW Flagler Avenue, Stuart. Funds are limited and subject to availability. Funding may be appropriated annually in the CRA budget. The continuation of the program is subject to the availability of funds in the CRA budget.

ELIGIBILITY

- Property must be within the boundaries of the Community Redevelopment Area. Refer to the attached CRA map.
- Must be a commercial property (i.e. retail, restaurant, office, service, mixed-use) and not solely provide living accommodations.
- Residential, non-profit and City owned/leased properties are not eligible.
- The property owner is the applicant; however, if the property is currently leased to a tenant, then the application and agreement must be jointly executed by both the owner and tenant.
- First time applications will receive priority consideration for funding allocation.
- Properties must not have building code or code enforcement issues/ City staff will verify this during its due diligence.
- Property must not have any tax liens and must be current on property taxes paid to the City of Stuart.
- Commercial businesses must have a current Business Tax License with the City of Stuart.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The grant provides funding for a comprehensive enhancement to a building's facade. A facade is defined as the principal face(s) of a building that is on a public street. Eligible projects include replacement, repair, or addition of **at least two** of the expenses below.

- Building facade materials or elevation enhancements (ex. brick, stucco, siding, stairs, ramps, or decorative features)
- Exterior architectural amenities (ex. addition or improvement of balconies, porches, entryways, or arcades) excluding Downtown Outdoor Dining Program establishments
- Exterior lighting (fixed structures that improve visibility and safety)
- Awnings/Canopies (New or Replacement) Decorative Fences (no metal chain link)
- Parking lots, driveways, and streetscaping (ex. benches, shade trees, bicycle racks) *
- Exterior cleaning and painting
- Replacement of impact or non-impact energy efficient windows and doors
- Sidewalks on private property
- Replacement of wall air-conditioning units on a building to energy efficient central air conditioning system
- Replacement of non-conforming pole signs to conforming freestanding or monument signs
- Dumpster enclosures
- Architectural, engineering or landscape architectural services for design to be funded through this program (maximum of $500 in grant funding)

All enhancements must be located on private property and comply with zoning and building codes. Any eligible expense incurred prior to the execution of the Business Improvement Program Agreement, or work performed without required permits, is ineligible for reimbursement.

* For extensive streetscape improvements, it is recommended that you also utilize the Commercial Landscape Improvement Program.

MAINTENANCE

The applicant shall assume responsibility for maintenance of improvements funded with the grant for a minimum of three (3) years. Failure to maintain can negatively impact future funding of projects for the subject property.

FUNDING GUIDELINES

The CRA is making available to eligible commercial properties within the Community Redevelopment Area a grant award that equates to 50% of eligible project costs, up to $10,000 to assist in exterior facade improvements. This money is available on a dollar-for-dollar match (for every one dollar the grantee puts in, the CRA will put in one dollar) but cannot exceed 50% of the total cost of the project. An agreement between the grantee and the CRA must be signed that will guarantee that any materials installed under the grant will not be removed or negatively altered (as determined by the CRA) for

three (3) years after installation, unless pre-approved by the CRA, and that it will be maintained in accordance with the City of Stuart's Community Redevelopment Plan and landscaping maintenance standards. If these provisions are not met, the CRA will have the right to request a return of any funds disbursed to the grantee with interest. Additionally, no work is to be undertaken without written approval of grant funds from the CRA. The program will not reimburse a grantee for work previously done, or already underway prior to the CRA board's approval of the grant.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

It is the intent of the CRA to fund applicants on a first-come, first-served basis, however, the CRA reserves the right as its sole discretion to make any final determinations as to how this program will be offered and implemented. This may include, but not limited to ranking of applicants, which applicants will be funded, all conditions of funding, and approval of all plans, designs and materials to be utilized. Applicants, even those that meet the eligibility criteria, may not be approved if the project conflicts with the objectives and goals of the City of Stuart's Community Redevelopment Plan and Land Development Code.

If the applicant is applying for the Landscape Improvement Reimbursement Program simultaneously, that applicant must complete the application form for both programs but may submit them together with all the required attachments as one package. Remember to include separate cost breakdown describing the improvements to be undertaken through each program. Acceptance of an application to one program does not guarantee approval of both programs.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Download an application from the City's website, or secure an application at City Hall, Community Redevelopment Agency office located on 121 SW Flagler Avenue, Downtown Stuart.
2. Review the application if you have any questions please call (772) 288-5375 or email jpinkston@ci.stuart.fl.us.
3. Submit a completed application package to City Hall, CRA office, which includes the following:

- ☐ Signed and completed application
- ☐ Proof of ownership of the property (ex. tax deed)
- ☐ Complete budget spreadsheet (attached to application)
- ☐ A minimum of two (2) bids/quotes from licensed contractors/agent registered with the City of Stuart or Martin County
- ☐ Photographs of existing conditions of the site to be improved (two minimum)
- ☐ Proof of ownership of the property (ex. tax deed)
- ☐ Preliminary façade improvement plan identifying types and location of materials, landscape plans; location of parking must be included in the plan and meet current code regulations

☐ New vendor application and W-9 Form (this is required for reimbursement)

The applicant is responsible for all building and other permits and fees which are associated with the proposed project.

4. City staff reviews the application for completeness, and eligibility. City staff may go to the project site and do a "walk-thru" of the property to consider the proposed improvements.
5. Staff will review the completed application based on the Land Development Code guidelines for recommendation to the Community Redevelopment Board (CRB) and Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Board. Staff will make recommendations to the application about how to prepare a competitive grant application.
6. Staff will present a recommendation for funding to the Community Redevelopment Board (CRB). The applicant or a representative must be present at the CRB meeting to be considered for the grant program. City staff will provide the public hearing date and time for the CRB meeting. The meeting will be held in the Stuart City Hall Commission Chambers located at 121 SW Flagler Avenue. The CRB will make a recommendation to the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Board.
7. The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Board will hear the agenda item and make the final recommendation for approval or denial of funding. City staff will provide the public hearing date and time for the CRA Board meeting. The applicant or a representative must be present at this meeting also. Staff will provide information for the meeting date and time.
8. The CRB and CRA Boards may award grant fund with certain provisions, conditions, or other requirements as it deems appropriate.
9. improvements of any component of the grant application cannot begin until the board approves the project. Any work completed prior to this approval will not be eligible for reimbursement. Upon CRA approval, the applicant will need to sign the contract and will have one year for project completion. If the project is not completed or is not approved in its final inspection (if applicable), within one year from the approval of the grant, the grant award shall expire. A request for extension may be requested at least 30 days prior to grant award expiration by contacting the CRA Director.

Once approved, the property owner will have to sign to specify the obligation of the applicant for grant reimbursement. The contract may be recorded in the public records of Martin County, Florida. For the duration of the improvements, the applicant will post a sign to be provided by the City which indicates the project has received a Landscape Improvement Grant and relevant program information. The sign can be picked up at Stuart City Hall, located at 121 SW Flagler Avenue, Stuart.

REIBURSEMENT PROCESS

Upon project completion, the applicant contacts the CRA Program Manager at (772) 288-5375. Disbursement of grant funds shall only occur when the following documents are submitted, and all other required conditions are met:

The applicant submits a "reimbursement package" to the CRA which includes the following:

- Proof of payment for improvements (which must be at least as much as the amount indicated in the application
- Copies of applicable invoices must show "paid in full" (receipts must clearly show how the project was paid, i.e. check, cash must be made by cashier's check or credit)
- Copies of passed final inspection (if applicable)
- A minimum of two (2) photos of completed improvements
- Completed W-9 form (if not provided with application submission)

If the project is not completed or is not approved in its final inspection within one year from the approval of the grant, the grant award shall expire.

If you have any questions regarding this application, please contact the CRA Program Manager at (772) 288-5375 or jpinkston@ci.stuart.fl.us or visit www.cityofstuart.us/CRA.

Community Redevelopment Agency

BUSINESS IMRPOVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

APPLICATION

APPLICANT INFORMATION		
Owner Name:		
Owner Address:		
Phone:	Email:	Tax ID#
Authorized Agent/Contractor:		
Agent Address:		
PROPERTY INFORMATION		
Name of Business:		
Address of Proposed Project:		
Type of Business:		
Years in Operation:		
Number of Employees:		
Description of Improvements:		
Describe how this project benefits the Community Redevelopment Area:		
Total Project Cost $		

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant/Property Owner Date

_____ _____

Signature of Lessee/Tenant (if applicable) Date

- Submit a completed application package to City Hall, CRA office, which includes the following:

  - ☐ Signed and completed application
  - ☐ Proof of ownership of the property (ex. tax deed)
  - ☐ Complete budget spreadsheet (attached to application)
  - ☐ A minimum of two (2) bids/quotes from licensed contractors/agent registered with the City of Stuart or Martin County
  - ☐ Photographs of existing conditions of the site to be improved (two minimum)
  - ☐ Proof of ownership of the property (ex. tax deed)
  - ☐ Preliminary landscape plan identifying types and location of materials, irrigation plans; location of parking must be included in the plan and meet current code regulations
  - ☐ New vendor application and W-9 Form (this is required for reimbursement)

The applicant is responsible for all building and other permits and fees which are associated with the proposed project.

- An application to the Business Improvement Grant Program will not be processed until a completed application packet is submitted to the Stuart Community Redevelopment Agency located in the City Hall, CRA Office at 121 SE Flagler Avenue, Stuart. If you have any questions, please call the CRA Program Manager at 772-288-5375.

- Applying is not a guarantee of funding.

Community Redevelopment Agency

BUSINESS IMRPOVEMENT REIMBURSMENT PROGRAM

EVALUATION CRITERIA STANDARDS

The following factors shall be considered in determining whether to award a grant. Grant applications must score a minimum of fifty (50) points to be considered for funding. A score of sixty (50) or more points does not guarantee funding. All funding is contingent of remaining fund availability.

The following evaluation matrix is a guide to assist the city staff in the evaluation process and provide a recommendation to the Community Redevelopment Board (CRB) and Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Board:

REVIEW CRITERIA	MAXIMUM POINTS	POINTS AWARDED
Improvements will have more visual impact (highly visual elements of the buildings are being improved and visible from the street; side and rear building facades where improvements will serve to remove blight)	15	
Match ratio of total renovation costs (projects that leverage more private investment will be scored higher than those seeking just the grant funding)	15	
Facade project is part of a larger project that improves other exterior or interior parts of the building	10	
Adjacent to other CRA projects (e.g. streetscape improvements, sidewalks, neighborhood improvements)	10	
Site improvement that improves the pedestrian and transportation functionality of the property (such as shade trees, benches, bike racks, etc.)	10	
Will serve as a catalyst for redevelopment	10	
Renovation and rehabilitation of historic buildings (listed on the City of Stuart Local Historic Register, National Historic Register, “1991 Historic Properties Survey” or local landmark designation)	10	
Location within high traffic and/or high visibility area (e.g. Federal Highway, Dixie Highway, Ocean Blvd., Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Old Downtown District, “The Creek” Arts & Entertainment District, etc.); or Located within the approved priority areas (map attached)	10	
First time applicant	10	
Total maximum number of points	**100**	

Community Redevelopment Agency

BUSINESS IMRPOVEMENT REIMBURSMENT PROGRAM

PROJECT COST ESTIMATE/REIMBURSEMENT FORM

Note: All Business Improvement Grant applicants need to complete the "Project Cost Estimate" portion of this form and submit documented cost estimates as a part of the application packet. To receive the grant reimbursement, the "Reimbursement Summary" portion of this form must be completed and submitted with copies of paid invoices indicating completion of improvements. All improvements must be completed, inspected, and have received final approval from the City of Stuart prior to reimbursement.

Project Cost Estimate				**Reimbursement Summary**		
Item	**Facade Improvement (parking lot, lighting, architecture, painting, etc.)**	**Contractor**	**Cost Estimate**	**Contractor**	**Date of Completion**	**Actual Cost (include proof of payment)**
1			**$**			**$**
2			**$**			**$**
3			**$**			**$**
4			**$**			**$**
5			**$**			**$**
6			**$**			**$**
7			**$**			**$**
		Total Cost Estimate	$		***Total Actual Cost***	$

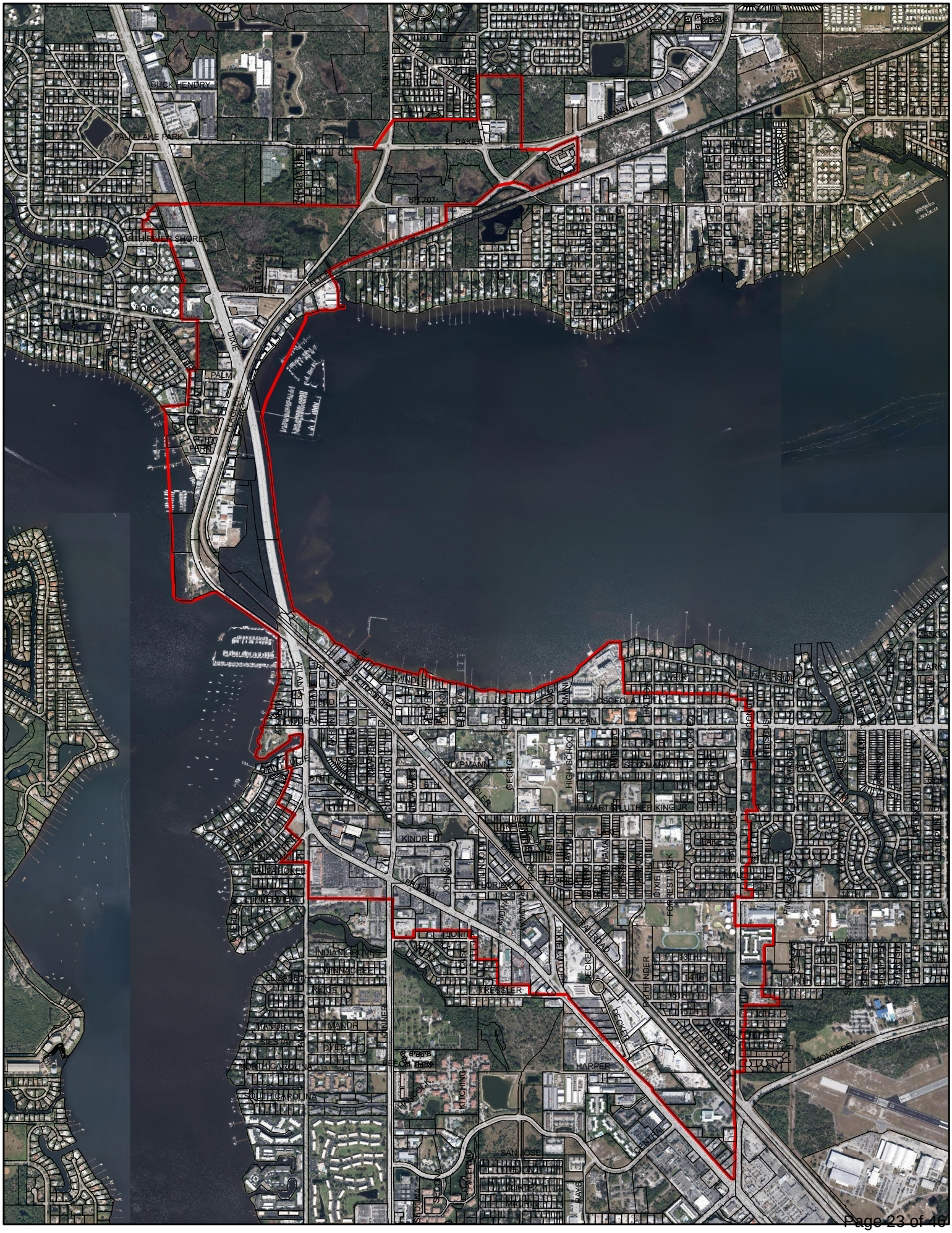
_____ _____

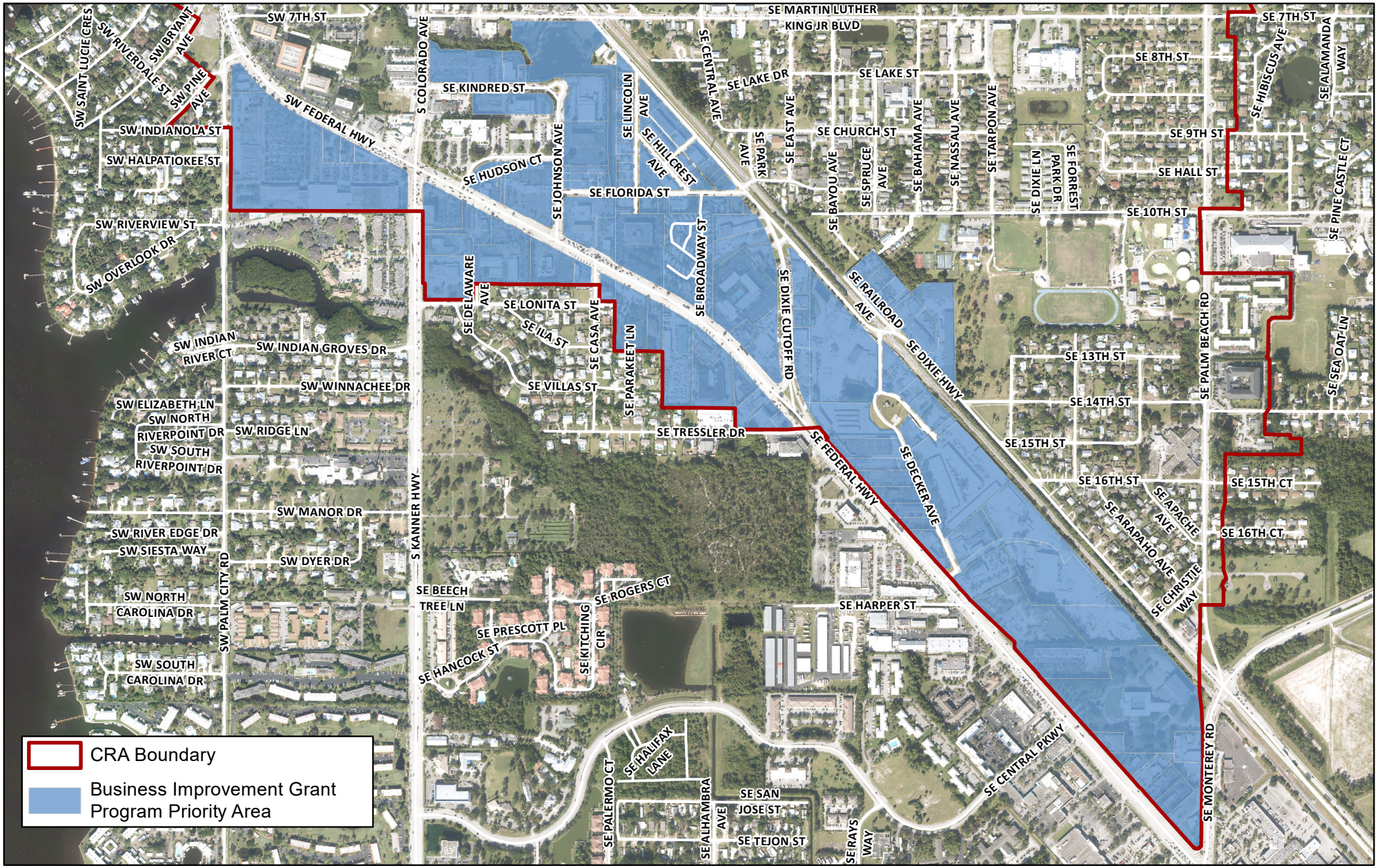
Signature of Applicant/Property Owner Date

_____ _____

Signature of Lessee/Tenant (if applicable) Date

Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Area Map





Proposed Arts and Entertainment has been creaetd by the City of Stuart Development Department as well as the Arts Council of Martin County. Aerial Imagery source is ESRI, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Aribus DS, USDA, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS Users Community. This map is a conceptual planning tool only.

City of Stuart
CRA Business Improvement Reimbursement Program Priority Area

City of Stuart DEVELOPMENT

N

1,000 500 0 1,000 Feet

Approved at Joint CRB/CRA/CC meeting on July 27, 2020

MJett

MINUTES
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT BOARD OF THE CITY OF STUART
OCTOBER 1, 2024
AT 4:00 PM
COMMISSION CHAMBERS
121 SW FLAGLER AVE.
STUART, FLORIDA 34994

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

Chair - Tom Campenni
Vice Chair - Mark Brechbill
Board Member - Aaron Hawkins
Board Member - Frank McChrystal
Board Member - Bonnie Moser
Board Member - Andy Noble
Board Member - VACANT

ADMINISTRATIVE

CRA Executive Director - Pinal Gandhi-Savdas
Board Secretary - Susej T. Meleqi

CALL TO ORDER

4:05 PM

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Chair Campenni, Vice Chair Brechbill, Board Member Cocoves, Board Member Hawkins, Board Member McChrystal, Board Member Moser, Board Member Noble

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

4:06 PM MOTION: Approve.
MOVED BY: Mark Brechbill
SECONDED BY: Andy Noble
Motion approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. APPROVAL OF 09/03/2024 CRB MINUTES

4:06 PM MOTION: Approve.
MOVED BY: Mark Brechbill
SECONDED BY: Bonnie Moser
Motion approved unanimously.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC (Non-Agenda Related) (3 Minutes Max.)

None.

COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS (Non-Agenda Items)

None.

ACTION ITEMS

2. 710 MARTIN LUTHER KING BOULEVARD - MAJOR AMENDMENT TO THE EXISTING COMMERCIAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (CPUD) ZONING DISTRICT (RC):

ORDINANCE No. 2532-2024; AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CITY'S OFFICIAL ZONING MAP, TO REZONE A 2.4-ACRE PARCEL; LOCATED AT 710 MARTIN LUTHER KING BOULEVARD, BEING MORE DESCRIBED IN EXHIBIT "A" ATTACHED, FOR MAJOR AMENDMENT TO THE EXISTING COMMERCIAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (CPUD) ZONING DESIGNATION TO ALLOW A VOCATIONAL TRAINING FACILITY ONLY; PROVIDING DIRECTIONS TO THE CITY CLERK; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Kris McCrain, Principle Planner presented the location, public notice, zoning, future land use map, public hearings, and staff's recommendation.

Vice Chair Brechbill asked what the current zoning on the property is, and asked if there is educational zoning.

Pinal Gandhi-Savdas, CRA Executive Director, explained the zoning and stated the code would need to be changed to add "educational zoning".

Bob Zachio, Project LIFT explained the schedule and the number of people on each shift.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Faye James - Stuart; Expressed concerns about this project and stated this project should be used as a multipurpose use for the community and felt like this is a club and the people who live around there are not invited.
2. James Christie - Stuart; Stated that the Willie Gary property is a true historical piece of property, is concerned about how the City originates projects with different entities.
3. Joseph Cooper - Stuart; He feels that the CPUD is the most appropriate for Project LIFT and thinks this will be impactful to the teens around East Stuart.
4. Helen McBride - Stuart; Stated she does not like the wording in the title of the Resolution "Vocational Training Facility Only".

Ms. Gandhi-Savdas explained the CDBG grant that was given and how it applies to this property.

Mr. Zacchhio explained Project LIFT and the different programs it has to offer.

Board Members asked about the entrepreneurship program, the engagement with the community, the historic portion, any community projects come forth from East Stuart, and committed to recruiting students from the East Stuart community.

Vice Chair Brechbill stated he believes staff has done a good job communicating with the community, but he feels that we need more buy in from the East Stuart community.

Board Members continued discussion.

4:46 PM MOTION: Approve.
MOVED BY: Mark Brechbill
SECONDED BY: Andy Noble
VOTE: MOTION PASSES 4/2
YES: Tom Campenni, Bonnie Moser, Andy Noble, Aaron Hawkins
NO: Frank McChrystal, Mark Brechbill

3. TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE SECTION 2.6.23 - NON-MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARIES (RC):

ORDINANCE No. 2531-2024; AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA AMENDING AND RESTATING THE CITY'S LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE; MORE SPECIFICALLY AMENDING SECTION 2.06.23 ENTITLED "RESERVED" AND INSERTING SUPPLEMENTAL USE STANDARDS FOR NON-MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARIES; AMENDING THE LAND USE TABLE IN SECTION 2.02.02 TO INCLUDE NON-MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARY AS AN ALLOWABLE USE UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS; AMENDING SECTION 3.01.03 TO ESTABLISH PARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR NON-MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARIES WITHIN THE URBAN CODE DISTRICTS; AMENDING SECTION 6.01.13 TO ADD OFF-STREET PARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR NON-MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARIES; AMENDING CHAPTER XII DEFINITIONS FOR CONFORMING TERMS; AMENDING CHAPTER 30 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES TO PROHIBIT SMOKING IN PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATIONAL AREAS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTING PROVISIONS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Ben Hogarth, Community Affairs Liaison, presented the ballot text, purpose, presented exclusion maps, and staff recommendation.

Board Member McChrystal asked how many medical marijuana dispensaries we have and asked about the exclusion zones.

Board Members continued discussions and questions with staff.

5:24 PM Board recommended to overlay the marijuana recreation sales with medical marijuana sales and limiting downtown with methodology like liquor licenses.

*****RECESS: 5:30 PM*****
*****RECONVENED: 5:35 PM*****

4. DISCUSSION & DELIBERATION ON BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT REIMBURSEMENT GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Jordan Pinkston, CRA Executive Director, presented program description, program background, evaluation matrix, past improvements, program accomplishments, board recommendation, program goals, eligible projects, evaluation criteria, discussion and deliberation.

Vice Chair Brechbill stated making the program a bigger program and including loans, so businesses can make bigger improvements.

Board Members continued discussion and shared their thoughts on the program. They agreed to support the program and its criteria.

5. DISCUSSION & DELIBERATION ON COMMERCIAL LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT REIMBURSEMENT GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

5:55 PM

Ms. Pinkston presented the program description, program goals, program funding, eligible improvements, maintenance, evaluation criteria, discussion and deliberation.

Board Member Moser asked if the irrigation is temporary or a permanent criteria.

Ms. Gandhi-Savdas stated it is a permanent criteria.

Chair Campenni stated it is the first time so he would like to roll it out and see how it goes for the first year.

STAFF UPDATE

ADJOURNMENT

6:01 PM

Susej T. Meleqi, Board Secretary **Tom Campenni, Chair**

Minutes to be approved at the CRB Meeting this 5th day of November, 2024.

MINUTES
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT BOARD OF THE CITY OF STUART
NOVEMBER 5, 2024
AT 4:00 PM
COMMISSION CHAMBERS
121 SW FLAGLER AVE.
STUART, FLORIDA 34994

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

Chair - Tom Campenni
Vice Chair - Mark Brechbill
Board Member - Aaron Hawkins
Board Member - Frank McChrystal
Board Member - Bonnie Moser
Board Member - Andy Noble
Board Member - VACANT

ADMINISTRATIVE

CRA Executive Director - Pinal Gandhi-Savdas
Board Secretary - Susej T. Meleqi

CALL TO ORDER

4:10 PM

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Chair Campenni, Board Member Hawkins, Board Member Moser, Board Member Noble
ABSENT: Vice Chair Brechbill, Board Member McChrystal

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

4:11 PM MOTION: Approve.
MOVED BY: Bonnie Moser
SECONDED BY: Andy Noble
Motion approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. APPROVAL OF 10/01/2024 CRB MINUTES

4:11 PM MOTION: Approve.
MOVED BY: Andy Noble
SECONDED BY: Bonnie Moser
Motion approved unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC (Non-Agenda Related) (3 Minutes Max.)

None.

COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS (Non-Agenda Items)

None.

ACTION ITEMS

2. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT REIMBURSEMENT GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES (RC):

RESOLUTION No. 12-2024 CRA; A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING THE CHAIRPERSON TO APPROVE AMENDMENT TO THE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM (BIRP) CRITERIA, EVALUATION MATRIX, AND CLARIFICATION TO PROGRAM GUIDELINES; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Jordan Pinkston, CRA Program Manager, presented the previous board direction, CRA Business Loan Program, Martin County Property Improvement program, recommended approval of the program as is.

Board Members had a discussion on the dollar amount that is currently in place with the program.

4:19 PM MOTION: Approve BIRP Guidelines without funding revisions.
MOVED BY: Andy Noble
SECONDED BY: Aaron Hawkins
Motion approved unanimously.

3. COMMERCIAL LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT REIMBURSEMENT GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES (RC):

RESOLUTION No. 13-2024 CRA; A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING COMMERCIAL PROPERTY LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM WITHIN THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Ms. Pinkston reviewed the guidelines and the landscape improvement program.

4:23 PM MOTION: Approve.
MOVED BY: Bonnie Moser
SECONDED BY: Aaron Hawkins
Motion approved unanimously.

STAFF UPDATE

None.

ADJOURNMENT

4:24 PM

Susej T. Meleqi, Board Secretary **Tom Campenni, Chair**

Minutes to be approved at the CRB Meeting this 3rd day of December, 2024.

CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA
AGENDA ITEM REQUEST
Community Redevelopment Agency

Meeting Date: 11/25/2024 **Prepared by:** Jordan Pinkston

Title of Item:
COMMERCIAL LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT REIMBURSEMENT GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES (RC):

RESOLUTION No. 13-2024 CRA; A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING A COMMERCIAL PROPERTY LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM WITHIN THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Summary Explanation/Background Information on Agenda Request:
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

On October 1, 2024, the Community Redevelopment Board was presented the proposed Commercial Landscape Improvement Reimbursement Grant Program Guidelines. The board recommended approval to initiate the new program with the provided program guidelines and budget.

On November 5, 2024, the Community Redevelopment Board motioned to approve Resolution No. 13-2024 CRA to establish the Commercial Landscape Improvement Reimbursement Grant Program.

SUMMARY

The City of Stuart Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Commercial Landscape Improvement Reimbursement Program is an incentive program designed to encourage irrigation and visible, exterior landscape improvements to commercial businesses in the Stuart Community Redevelopment Area to encourage shade trees, walkability, native plants and meet the City of Stuart's Land Development Code requirements.

The CRA recognizes that many properties within the Community Redevelopment Area were constructed before the adoption of the City's current landscape code. This has left the CRA with many commercial properties that provide little, if any, aesthetic appeal. It is the intent of the CRA to rectify this situation by encouraging all eligible applicants to upgrade landscaping along the perimeter of a commercial property that abuts a public right-of-way and interior parking lot landscaping to enhance the visible appearance of the property and provide shade along streets to improve walkability. If there are site limitations, the applicant may consider planting shade trees within the City's right-of-way adjacent to their property.

Eligible improvements may include, but are not limited to, landscape design, plant and irrigation installation, asphalt removal, plant materials, xeriscaping, native plants, and shade trees. Irrigation is a requirement for reimbursement. The following is not eligible for funding on its own, but it may be funded as part of a more comprehensive landscape improvement: decorative walls, fencing, planters, and hardscape plazas (where appropriate in pedestrian areas). Based on recommendation, irrigation is a requirement for reimbursement. All improvements proposed in the grant application must be consistent with the Community Redevelopment Plan and the Land Development Code overlay design guidelines.

The City of Stuart Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Commercial Landscape Improvement Reimbursement Program shall provide, on a reimbursement basis, 50% matching grant for eligible landscape improvements, up to $5,000, which is consistent with and further the implementation of the Stuart Community Redevelopment Plan and City of Stuart Land Development Code, and visible from the roadway.

An agreement between the grantee and the CRA must be signed that will guarantee that any materials installed under the grant will not be removed or negatively altered (as determined by the CRA) for three (3) years after installation, unless pre-approved by the CRA, and that it will be maintained in accordance with the City of Stuart's landscaping maintenance standards. If these provisions are not met, the CRA will have the right to request a return of any funds disbursed to the grantee with interest. Additionally, no work is to be undertaken without written approval of grant funds from the CRA. The program will not reimburse a grantee for work previously done, or already underway prior to the CRA board's approval of the grant.

It is the intent of the CRA to fund applicants on a first-come, first-served basis. However, the CRA reserves the right as its sole discretion to make any final determinations as to how this program will be offered and implemented. This may include, but not limited to: ranking of applicants, which applicants will be funded, all conditions of funding, and approval of all plans, designs and materials to be utilized. Applicants, even those that meet the eligibility criteria, may not be approved if the project conflicts with the objectives and goals of the City of Stuart's Land Development Code.

If the applicant is applying for the Business Improvement Reimbursement Grant Program simultaneously, that applicant must complete the application form for both programs but may submit them together with all the required attachments as one package. Remember to include breakdowns describing the improvements to be undertaken through each program. Acceptance of an application to one program does not guarantee approval of both programs.

BACKGROUND

Commercial businesses are essential to the fabric of Downtown Stuart. For the past 15 years, the CRA has offered businesses financial relief for improvements made through the Business Improvement Reimbursement Grant Program. Over the years, program initiatives shifted, and the guidelines and evaluation matrix were amended to encourage upgrades of landscaping and trees to promote shade, walkability, and bring businesses into compliance with the City's Land Development Code.

Staff and business owners have found it increasingly difficult to fund their façade and building improvements along with additional landscape requests for the program. The Community Redevelopment Board and Community Redevelopment Agency supported staff to implement a separate program focusing on grant assistance for business owners that plan to make significant landscape improvements. The Commercial Landscape Improvement Grant Program can be used in conjunction with a BIRP application or be applied for independently.

Funding Source:

The grant program provides a reimbursement of up to $5,000 of public funds per property to match private funds to pay for the design and completion of landscape improvements. The grant shall be available for commercial businesses which may qualify for a reimbursement of 50% of the applicant's total project costs up to $5,000.

The CRA has allocated $25,000 of CRA TIF funding for FY 2025 to budget for the program. The budget is pending Commission approval.

Recommended Action:

Motion to approve Resolution No. 13-2024 CRA to implement the Commercial Landscape Improvement Reimbursement Grant Program.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. R13-2024 CRA - Commercial Property Landscape Improvement Grant Program
2. EXHIBIT A: Commercial Landscape Improvement Reimbursement Grant Program_GUIDELINES
3. Commercial Landscape Improvement Reimbursement Grant Program_APPLICATION
4. Commercial Landscape Improvement Reimbursement Grant Program_REIMBURSEMENT FORM
5. CRA Map

BEFORE THE CITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA

RESOLUTION No. 13-2024 CRA

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING A COMMERCIAL PROPERTY LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM WITHIN THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

* * * * *

WHEREAS, the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Stuart finds that it in the best interest of the City to establish a Commercial Property Landscape Improvement Grant that will allow for reimbursement from the Community Redevelopment Agency to commercial business and property owners, in an amount not to exceed $5,000, for costs incurred by the owners for landscaping improvements on existing properties, resulting in visually appealing commercial properties and promoting economic vitality within the Community Redevelopment Area; and

WHEREAS, the Community Redevelopment Agency finds that the use of tax increment financing for such matching grant program is in accordance with the Community Redevelopment Area Plan; and

WHEREAS, on October 1, 2024, the Community Redevelopment Board reviewed the proposed Landscape Improvement Matching Grant Program and recommended approval of the program; and

WHEREAS, on October 28, 2024, by Resolution No. 13-2024 CRA, the Community Redevelopment Agency Board approved the implementation of the Landscape Improvement Matching Grant Program.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF STUART, FLORIDA that:

SECTION 1: The Stuart Community Redevelopment Agency Board has determined that it is in the public interest that the Community Redevelopment Agency Board to approve the Commercial Property Landscape Improvement Matching Grant Program, as attached hereto as **"Exhibit A"** and incorporated herein, and therefore, approves said program.

SECTION 2: This resolution shall take effect upon adoption.

Board Member _____ offered the foregoing resolution and moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Board Member _____ and upon being put to a roll call vote, the vote was as follows: vote was as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
CAMPBELL RICH, CHAIRPERSON				
EULA R. CLARKE, BOARD MEMBER				
CHRISTOPHER COLLINS, BOARD MEMBER				
LAURA GIOBBI, BOARD MEMBER				
SEAN REED, BOARD MEMBER				
TOM CAMPENNI, EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBER				
MARK BRECHBILL, EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBER				

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2024.

ATTEST:

_____
MARY KINDEL
CITY CLERK

_____
CAMPBELL RICH
CHAIRPERSON

APPROVED AS TO FORM
AND CORRECTNESS:

_____
LEE J. BAGGETT, ESQ
CITY ATTORNEY

Community Redevelopment Agency

COMMERCIAL LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

GUIDELINES

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The City of Stuart Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Commercial Landscape Improvement Grant Program is designed to facilitate the enhancement of existing commercial properties within the Stuart Community Redevelopment Area. The intent of the program is to substantively improve the landscape appearance of the existing commercial properties within the redevelopment area. The program will provide financial assistance to existing businesses in the form of a grant intended to reduce the costs for landscaping improvements that result in more visually appealing commercial properties in accordance with the Stuart Community Redevelopment Plan.

The grant program provides a reimbursement of up to $5,000 of public funds per property to match private funds to assist in landscape improvements. The grant shall be available on a dollar-to-dollar match (for every dollar the grantee puts in, the Stuart CRA will put in one dollar) for commercial businesses which may qualify for a reimbursement of 50% of the applicant's total project costs up to $5,000.

The CRA recognizes that many properties within the Community Redevelopment Area were constructed before the adoption of the City's current landscape code. This has left the CRA with many commercial properties that provide little, if any, aesthetic appeal. It is the intent of the CRA to rectify this situation by encouraging all eligible applicants to upgrade landscaping along the perimeter of a commercial property that abuts a public right-of-way and interior parking lot landscaping to enhance the visible appearance of the property and provide shade along streets to improve walkability.

ELIGIBILITY

- Property must be within the boundaries of the Community Redevelopment Area. Refer to the attached CRA map.
- Must be a commercial property (i.e. retail, restaurant, office, service, mixed-use) and not solely provide living accommodations.
- Residential, non-profit and City owned/leased properties are not eligible.
- The property owner is the applicant; however, if the property is currently leased to a tenant, then the application and agreement must be jointly executed by both the owner and tenant.
- First time applications will receive priority consideration for funding allocation.
- Properties must not have building code or code enforcement issues/ City staff will verify this during its due diligence.
- Property must not have any tax liens and must be current on property taxes paid to the City of Stuart.
- Commercial businesses must have a current Business Tax License with the City of Stuart.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The City of Stuart Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Commercial Landscape Improvement Reimbursement Program shall provide, on a reimbursement basis, 50% matching grant for eligible landscape improvements, up to $5,000, which are consistent with and further the implementation of the Stuart Community Redevelopment Plan and City of Stuart Land Development Code, and visible from the roadway. **Irrigation for landscaping is required for reimbursement.** Funds may be used for one or more of the following types of enhancements as a part of an improvement program:

- Landscaping around buildings and lot perimeter, for buffers, parking lot islands, green space (landscaping shall include native plants and shade trees where feasible)
- Installation of Irrigation system
- Demolition and removal of asphalt, concrete, impervious surfaces to add landscape areas

The following is not eligible for funding on its own, but it may be funded as part of a more comprehensive landscape improvement: decorative walls, fencing, planters, and hardscape plazas (where appropriate in pedestrian areas).

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

There are several items in the City Landscape Code that are not eligible expenses. These items include but are not limited to:

- Installation of trash receptacles
- Dumpster enclosures
- Screening or landscaping to masonry walls for buffering zones between non-residential and residential properties.
- Replacement of existing materials and work associated with the City of Stuart Land Development Code

MAINTENANCE

The applicant shall assume responsibility for maintenance of improvements funded with the grant for a minimum of three (3) years. Failure to maintain can negatively impact future funding of projects for the subject property.

FUNDING GUIDELINES

The CRA is making available to eligible commercial properties within the Community Redevelopment Area a grant award that equates to 50% of eligible project costs, up to $5,000 to assist in landscape improvements. This money is available on a dollar-for-dollar match (for every one dollar the grantee puts in, the CRA will put in one dollar) but cannot exceed 50% of the total cost of the project. An agreement between the grantee and the CRA must be signed that will guarantee that any materials installed under the grant will not be removed or negatively altered (as determined by the CRA) for three (3) years after installation, unless pre-approved by the CRA, and that it will be maintained in

accordance with the City of Stuart's landscaping maintenance standards. If these provisions are not met, the CRA will have the right to request a return of any funds disbursed to the grantee with interest. Additionally, no work is to be undertaken without written approval of grant funds from the CRA. The program will not reimburse a grantee for work previously done, or already underway prior to the CRA board's approval of the grant.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

It is the intent of the CRA to fund applicants on a first-come, first-served basis, however, the CRA reserves the right as its sole discretion to make any final determinations as to how this program will be offered and implemented. This may include, but not limited to ranking of applicants, which applicants will be funded, all conditions of funding, and approval of all plans, designs and materials to be utilized. Applicants, even those that meet the eligibility criteria, may not be approved if the project conflicts with the objectives and goals of the City of Stuart's Land Development Code.

If the applicant is applying for the Business Improvement Reimbursement Grant Program simultaneously, that applicant must complete the application form for both programs but may submit them together with all the required attachments as one package. Remember to include separate cost breakdown describing the improvements to be undertaken through each program. Acceptance of an application to one program does not guarantee approval of both programs.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Download an application from the City's website, or secure an application at City Hall, Community Redevelopment Agency office located on 121 SW Flagler Avenue, Downtown Stuart.
2. Review the application if you have any questions please call (772) 288-5375 or email jpinkston@ci.stuart.fl.us.
3. Submit a completed application package to City Hall, CRA office, which includes the following:

- ☐ Signed and completed application
- ☐ Proof of ownership of the property (ex. tax deed)
- ☐ Complete budget spreadsheet (attached to application)
- ☐ A minimum of two (2) bids/quotes from licensed contractors/agent registered with the City of Stuart or Martin County
- ☐ Photographs of existing conditions of the site to be improved (two minimum)
- ☐ Proof of ownership of the property (ex. tax deed)
- ☐ Preliminary landscape plan identifying types and location of materials, irrigation plans; location of parking must be included in the plan and meet current code regulations
- ☐ New vendor application and W-9 Form (this is required for reimbursement)

The applicant is responsible for all building and other permits and fees which are associated with the proposed project.

4. City staff reviews the application for completeness, and eligibility. City staff may go to the project site and do a "walk-thru" of the property to consider the proposed improvements.
5. Staff will review the completed application based on the Land Development Code guidelines for recommendation to the Community Redevelopment Board (CRB) and Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Board. Staff will make recommendations to the application about how to prepare a competitive grant application.
6. Staff will present a recommendation for funding to the Community Redevelopment Board (CRB). The applicant or a representative must be present at the CRB meeting to be considered for the grant program. City staff will provide the public hearing date and time for the CRB meeting. The meeting will be held in the Stuart City Hall Commission Chambers located at 121 SW Flagler Avenue. The CRB will make a recommendation to the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Board.
7. The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Board will hear the agenda item and make the final recommendation for approval or denial of funding. City staff will provide the public hearing date and time for the CRA Board meeting. The applicant or a representative must be present at this meeting also. Staff will provide information for the meeting date and time.
8. The CRB and CRA Boards may award grant fund with certain provisions, conditions, or other requirements as it deems appropriate.
9. improvements of any component of the grant application cannot begin until the board approves the project. Any work completed prior to this approval will not be eligible for reimbursement. Upon CRA approval, the applicant will need to sign the contract and will have one year for project completion. If the project is not completed or is not approved in its final inspection (if applicable), within one year from the approval of the grant, the grant award shall expire. A request for extension may be requested at least 30 days prior to grant award expiration by contacting the CRA Director.

Once approved, the property owner will have to sign to specify the obligation of the applicant for grant reimbursement. The contract may be recorded in the public records of Martin County, Florida. For the duration of the improvements, the applicant will post a sign to be provided by the City which indicates the project has received a Landscape Improvement Grant and relevant program information. The sign can be picked up at Stuart City Hall, located at 121 SW Flagler Avenue, Stuart.

REIBURSEMENT PROCESS

Upon project completion, the applicant contacts the CRA Program Manager at (772) 288-5375. Disbursement of grant funds shall only occur when the following documents are submitted, and all other required conditions are met:

The applicant submits a "reimbursement package" to the CRA which includes the following:

- Proof of payment for improvements (which must be at least as much as the amount indicated in the application

- Copies of applicable invoices must show “paid in full” (receipts must clearly show how the project was paid, i.e. check, cash must be made by cashier’s check or credit)
- Copies of passed final inspection (if applicable)
- A minimum of two (2) photos of completed improvements
- Completed W-9 form (if not provided with application submission)

If the project is not completed or is not approved in its final inspection within one year from the approval of the grant, the grant award shall expire.

If you have any questions regarding this application, please contact the CRA Program Manager at (772) 288-5375 or jpinkston@ci.stuart.fl.us or visit www.cityofstuart.us/CRA.

Community Redevelopment Agency

COMMERCIAL LANDSCAPE IMRPOVEMENT PROGRAM

APPLICATION

APPLICANT INFORMATION		
Owner Name:		
Owner Address:		
Phone:	Email:	Tax ID#
Authorized Agent/Contractor:		
Agent Address:		
PROPERTY INFORMATION		
Name of Business:		
Address of Proposed Project:		
Type of Business:		
Years in Operation:		
Number of Employees:		
Description of Improvements:		
Describe how this project benefits the Community Redevelopment Area:		
Total Project Cost $		

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant/Property Owner Date

_____ _____

Signature of Lessee/Tenant (if applicable) Date

- Submit a completed application package to City Hall, CRA office, which includes the following:

  - ☐ Signed and completed application
  - ☐ Proof of ownership of the property (ex. tax deed)
  - ☐ Complete budget spreadsheet (attached to application)
  - ☐ A minimum of two (2) bids/quotes from licensed contractors/agent registered with the City of Stuart or Martin County
  - ☐ Photographs of existing conditions of the site to be improved (two minimum)
  - ☐ Proof of ownership of the property (ex. tax deed)
  - ☐ Preliminary landscape plan identifying types and location of materials, irrigation plans; location of parking must be included in the plan and meet current code regulations
  - ☐ New vendor application and W-9 Form (this is required for reimbursement)

The applicant is responsible for all building and other permits and fees which are associated with the proposed project.

- An application to the Landscape Improvement Grant Program will not be processed until a completed application packet is submitted to the Stuart Community Redevelopment Agency located in the City Hall, CRA Office at 121 SE Flagler Avenue, Stuart. If you have any questions, please call the CRA Program Manager at 772-288-5375.

- Applying is not a guarantee of funding.

Community Redevelopment Agency

COMMERCIAL LANDSCAPE IMRPOVEMENT PROGRAM

PROJECT COST ESTIMATE/REIMBURSEMENT FORM

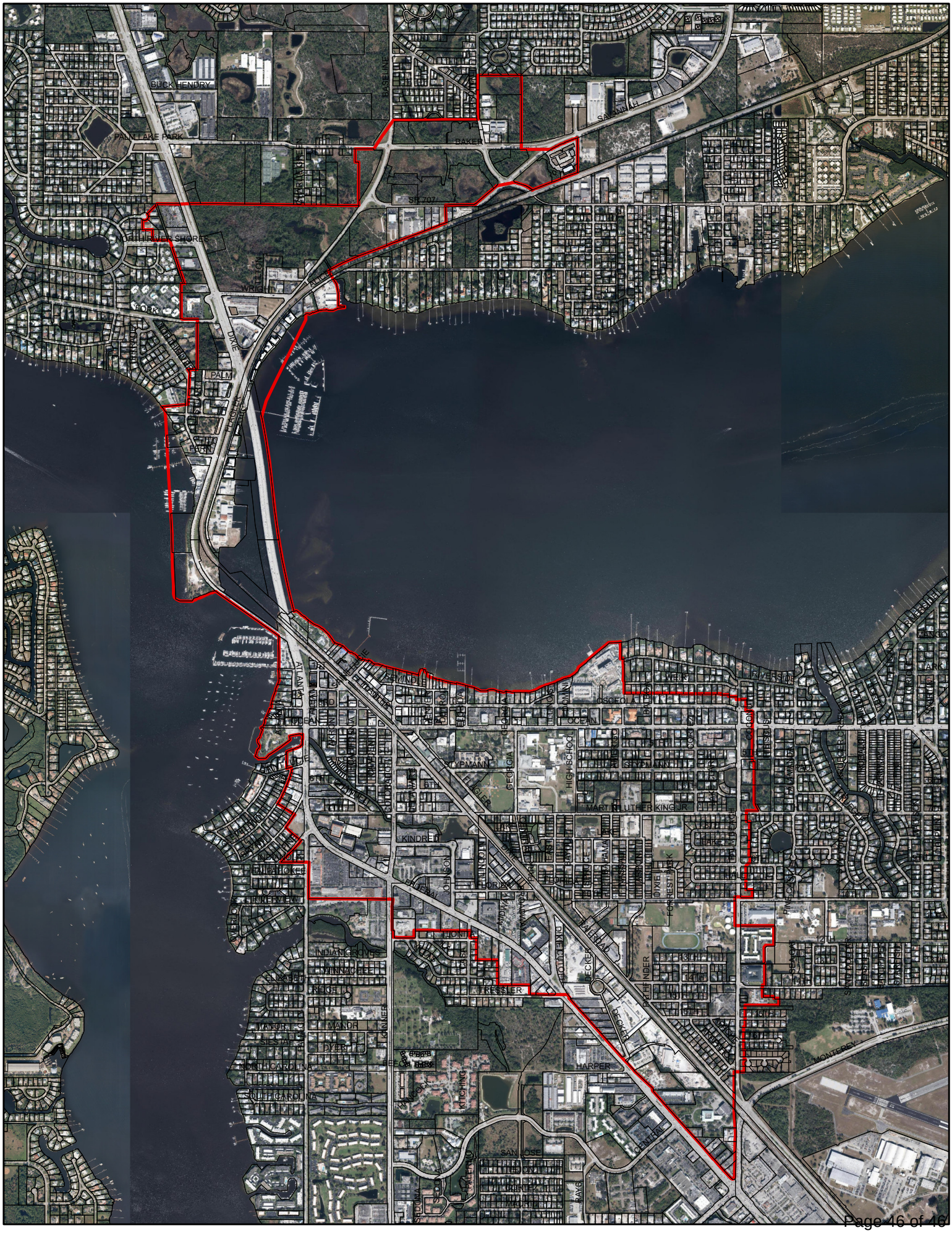
Note: All Commercial Landscape Improvement Grant applicants need to complete the "Project Cost Estimate" portion of this form and submit documented cost estimates as a part of the application packet. To receive the grant reimbursement, the "Reimbursement Summary" portion of this form must be completed and submitted with copies of paid invoices indicating completion of improvements. All improvements must be completed, inspected, and have received final approval from the City of Stuart prior to reimbursement.

Project Cost Estimate				**Reimbursement Summary**		
Item	**Landscape Improvement (Irrigation, plants, installation, asphalt, etc.)**	**Contractor**	**Cost Estimate**	**Contractor**	**Date of Completion**	**Actual Cost (include proof of payment)**
1			**$**			**$**
2			**$**			**$**
3			**$**			**$**
4			**$**			**$**
5			**$**			**$**
6			**$**			**$**
7			**$**			**$**
		Total Cost Estimate	$		***Total Actual Cost***	$

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant/Property Owner Date

_____ _____

Signature of Lessee/Tenant (if applicable) Date

Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Area Map