

Placemaking in Florida: FRA
2009 Award Winner

*Creative Organizational
Development and
Funding*

West Palm Beach Community Redevelopment Agency

October 29, 2009

Northwood Village Merchant Assistant Program

A Tool for Business Retention

Purpose:

The Merchant Assistance Incentive Program is designed to assist existing businesses in increasing sales through training and merchandising techniques.

Criteria:

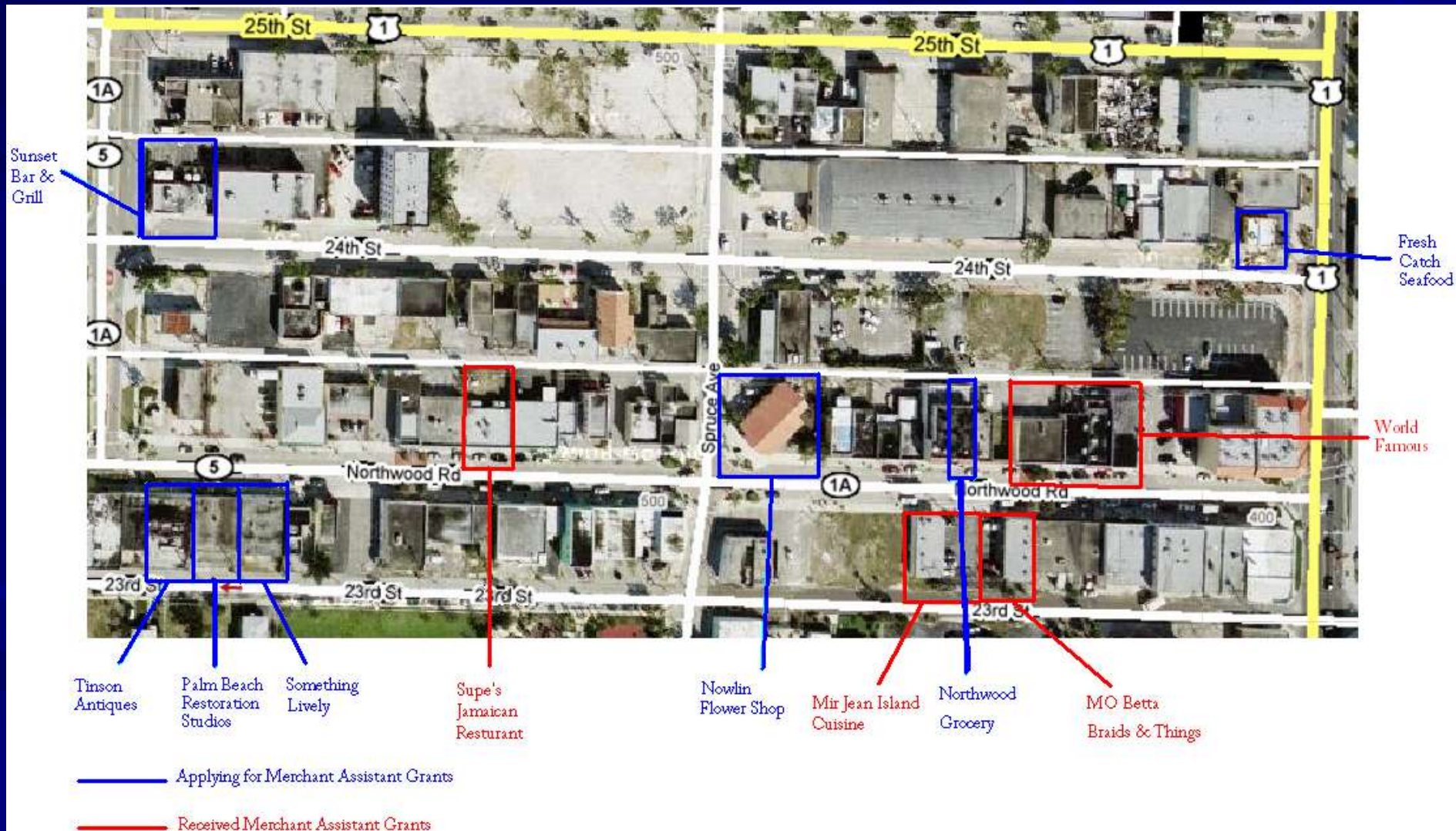
The Program is available to restaurant and retail businesses who meet the following qualifications;

- Must be an established restaurant or retail business for a minimum of three (3) years and be located in Northwood Village
- Must be able to justify economic distress and/or outside factors that are negatively affecting sales/cash flow and sustainability
- Business owner must be willing to attend courses or work one-on-one with a retail consultant recommended by the CRA in merchandising, advertising, promotion and related training
- Business owner must continue to use materials provided including materials for display, visual representation of merchandise, and other instruments recommended by the consultant
- Business owner must attempt to implement recommendations related to sales and customer service techniques

Goals:

- Evaluate the business to re-merchandise an occupied space
- Evaluate the business and create a marketing strategy
- Train restaurant and retail business operators in advertising, marketing, promotion, sales and service techniques and other related tools to stimulate sales for business retention purposes
- Upgrade the business to gain a competitive edge
- Provide grant up to \$15,000

The map below depicts the businesses that are eligible for the program. To date, four (4) businesses have completed improvements and seven (7) businesses are in the process of applying for the program. The target area for this program is Northwood Village, a six block business district.



Before



After



Business - Supes Jamaican Restaurant

located in Northwood Village for 4 years

Problem: Restaurant sales had decreased over the past year. The owner realized he could capitalize on additional food sales by improving the interior of the business. Customers hesitated to eat in the dining room because there was no air conditioning. A professional consultant was hired to evaluate the business and make recommendations for improvements.

Received a \$15,000 Merchant Assistance Grant for the following:

- The consultant created a floor plan and chose tropical theme colors to improve the tired look of the seating area. Replaced the wall air conditioner, tropical ceiling fans, dropped ceiling by adding corrugated colorful panels, new flooring tiles to match the ceiling, new lighting and bamboo dividers to separate the serving area from the dining room area.
- New equipment included and air conditioner, lighting, tables, chairs, storage cabinet/wait station and tableware.

Results: Increased customer base by creating an aesthetically pleasing and comfortable dining area.

Celebrated Grand Reopening on April 24, 2009.

Before



After



Business – MirJean Island Cuisine
located in Northwood Village for 4 years.

Problem: Restaurant sales had decreased in the past year. The owner realized he could capitalize on additional food sales by improving the interior of the business. A professional consultant was hired to evaluate the business and make recommendations for improvements.

Received a \$15,000 Merchant Assistance Grant for the following:

- Interior improvements including relocating the take out counter to create more floor space, removing a wall that divided the restaurant space, replacement of floor tiles where needed, new island mural, new ceiling tiles, painting, decorative lighting and relocating the bathroom entrance.
- New equipment included lighting, tables, chairs and tableware.

Results: Increased customer base by creating a larger and aesthetically pleasing dine in area.

Celebrated Grand Reopening on April 24, 2009.



Before



After



Business – World Famous Restaurant

located in Northwood Village for 15 years.

Problem: World Famous saw a steady decline in sales over the past few years. A restaurant consultant was retained to address the operations and aesthetic appeal of the restaurant.

Approved for a \$15,000 Merchant Assistance Grant for the following:

- Management and wait staff training, development of a new menu concept maintaining the Southern/Soul food cuisine.
- New equipment including a Point of Sales system, replacement of kitchen equipment, tableware, tables and chairs.

Results: As direct result of the recommendations of the consultant, World Famous completed a \$300,000 interior makeover. The menu was upgraded, space was created for live entertainment and dancing, 14 additional employees were hired and sales have steadily increased.

Celebrated Grand Reopening on February 27, 2009.

Before



After



Business – Mo Betta Braids & Things
located in Northwood Village for 5 years.

Problem: The business maintained a steady customer base but wanted to expand current operations, hire additional employees, change the aesthetics of the business and re-merchandise the space to add retail sales of product.

Approved for a \$15,000 Merchant Assistance Grant for the following:

- Minor Interior improvements including a reception counter, painting, lighting, waterfall divider wall and ceiling tiles.
- New equipment included a shampoo station, style station, pedi spa, nail table, display cases and specialty lighting.

Results: Hired 2 employees and expanded their customer base by providing additional services.

Celebrated Grand Reopening on April 24, 2009