**Boynton Beach Community Redevelopment Agency**

**2017 Roy F. Kenzie Awards**

**Planning Studies**

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The City of Boynton Beach created the Boynton Beach Community Redevelopment Area and Agency in 1982 as a tool for the redevelopment of the downtown area. Through several expansions, the area has grown to its current size of 1,650 acres.

Until now, the redevelopment activities were influenced by four different plans that overlapped and did not provide a focused vision for the entire CRA area. In August 2014, the City Commission and CRA Board participated in a Strategic Planning Initiative workshop and a high priority recommendation was to consolidate the existing plans with a comprehensive update that would reflect the changes in economic environment, the objectives, as well as the achievements of the previous years. There was consensus from the Public that in spite of these significant achievements, the vision of a vibrant downtown with revitalized corridors has yet to be realized. The first phase of the consolidation—the analysis of the current conditions—confirmed this assessment and provided a base for the Plan’s recommendations.

The overarching goal of creating this comprehensive CRA Plan was to provide a clear and consistent vision for the CRA District, which provides a predictability for new development and investment in the area. The Plan effectively and clearly communicates the direction of the Community Redevelopment Agency and key redevelopment opportunities as well as addresses some areas of the CRA District that have not, in the past, had formally adopted plans.

**INNOVATION:**

A key element of the 2016 CRA Plan is that it is organized into six distinct districts, identified according to their character, history, location, land use and zoning make-up: the Industrial Craft District, the Heart of Boynton District, the Cultural District, the Boynton Beach Boulevard District, the Downtown District and the Federal Highway District. Each district plan reflects a unique vision based on its role within the CRA. Achieving the vision and ultimate redevelopment goals of each district is facilitated by providing both general and specific recommendations involving topics ranging from the structure of the City’s Future Land Use Classifications to the undergrounding of public utilities. Below are the three key recommendations that are thought to have the greatest benefit to the redevelopment of the CRA.

**COMMUNITY IMPACT:**

* **Change in the Future Land Use Structure of the Comprehensive Plan**

The Plan proposes changes to the existing future land use (FLU) and zoning categories. For example, the Mixed Use Core future land use classification currently allows a maximum density of 80 du/acre, and the Mixed Use classification allows a maximum density of 40 du/acre. Adding new density categories in between these two numbers will create a more gradual scale of increases and more freedom in the development market.

* The Plan proposes to establish a third mixed-use classification to fill this intensity gap. This action will facilitate a more appropriate transition in land use densities and intensities characteristic of the newly recognized Districts, and allow the establishment of secondary activity centers called nodes, to support redevelopment of Town Square, property at the future rail station and at Woolbright Road and Federal Highway
* **Application of the Complete Streets design principles**

The Plan proposes the redesign of most major streets within the CRA district according to the Complete Streets design principles in order to implement the connectivity and walkability objectives of the Plan. Achieving this objective is critical to the Plan’s success which depends on the interconnection of planning districts in a CRA that occupies over 1,600 acres consisting of all types of land uses and varying land use densities and intensities. By building complete streets throughout the CRA, the ideal circulation system will be established to accommodate residents, workers, commuters and visitors traveling within the downtown.

* These principles will be applied to both public improvements as well as private development to ensure that adequate space is secured to accommodate all components of a complete street including vehicle travel lanes at appropriate widths for the downtown, parking, bike lanes, the “pedestrian zone” and beautification.
* **Urban and Architectural Design Guidelines**

The Plan recommends adoption of a comprehensive urban design framework to ensure that the built environment achieves the intended physical vision for the CRA – high quality buildings and vibrant, rich public realm, creating the places in which people will want to live, work and relax.

* The design guidelines will foster sustainable and predictable development in all districts while helping to realize the Plan’s vision for each. For example, to achieve the desired image and function of East Ocean Avenue within the Cultural District, which will build upon its unique scale and ability to accommodate special events, the regulatory standards will address building heights, massing, setbacks and uses.

**OTHER EXEMPLARY ASPECTS OF THE PLAN: PROBLEM SOLVING**

* Create a unique identity for the Districts drawing on elements such as its historic commercial marine industries, recreational amenities and cultural and public arts through special events, programs, projects and marketing.
* Create a balance of sustainable and functional land uses for each District as a base for District plans.
* Protect and enhance existing single-family neighborhoods.
* Encourage the expansion of existing businesses and seek to attract new ones with incentives and technical assistance.
* Develop a coordinated signage program, including welcome signage, way-finding signage and street banners that will identify and promote each District.
* Program and promote special events through available financial, staffing, marketing or other mechanisms.
* Create a comfortable, walkable and safe pedestrian-scale environment connecting residents and visitors to the commercial, social/cultural and recreational areas within each District.
* Create zoning and land use development regulations that support a diversity of mixed uses in the downtown area and adjacent planning areas including but not limited to residential, destination commercial, retail, restaurants, hotels, office, civic and recreational uses.
* Develop policies and strategies for providing adequate public parking areas within each District to support commercial and residential redevelopment such as but not limited to financial incentives, land acquisition and construction.
* Create/encourage/support land development regulations that provide alternatives to parking requirements.
* Encourage and assist existing development and redevelopment projects that provide employment and economic opportunities.
* Create programs, projects and funding which supports existing and new commercial development and act as a catalyst to leverage additional investment by private sector enterprise such as, but not limited to, economic incentives for rehabilitation or construction activities, development costs or infrastructure improvements.
* Provide programs that market and promote the businesses, activities, special events, development and redevelopment opportunities and projects within each District.
* Pursue development and redevelopment projects; actively engage in land acquisition and disposal, environmental and economic viability studies, building demolition and construction, site and infrastructure improvements, and project design and construction.
* Create, improve and promote the public waterfront areas and public open spaces, parks, greenways, blueways and bikeways.
* Encourage and incentivize the improvement, development and implementation of streetscape enhancements within the Districts, including landscaping, street furniture and hardscape features, signage, pedestrian safety and walkability/connectivity, crosswalk treatments and lighting elements.
* Encourage the preservation of existing affordable housing and the development of new affordable housing by providing technical assistance, incentives and land.
* Encourage the preservation of the commercial and recreational marine industries operating within the CRA, such as, but not limited to, the Boynton Harbor Marina District, by financial investment, physical improvements, special events, marketing and promotional activities.
* Encourage the preservation of the existing public waterfront access areas and—wherever feasible—provide for the addition of new public waterfront access through acquisition, easements or other means available to the Agency.
* Encourage and initiate various innovative community policing techniques and programs, code enforcement, “clean and safe” programs and policies, and other means deemed feasible and appropriate in order to stabilize and enhance neighborhoods and commercial areas.

**Summary: APPLICABILITY TO OTHER COMMUNITIES**

The CRA’s efforts to consolidate the number of plans that govern the development and funding of projects throughout the CRA district began in the fall of 2015, continuing throughout the spring and summer of 2016. The result of this year long public process culminated into the new 2016 CRA Redevelopment Plan, approved by the CRA Board on August 9, 2016 and approved by the City Commission October 4, 2016. The 2016 CRA Redevelopment Plan provides the public and development community with the vision, incentives and recommendations clearly outlined in one plan. The CRA Plan is divided into six (6) identified Districts: 1) the Boynton Beach Boulevard district; 2) the Cultural district; 3) the Downtown district; 4) the Federal Highway district; 5) the Heart of Boynton district; and 6) the Industrial Craft district. Each of these provides the CRA with unique redevelopment challenges and opportunities, clearly defined under the new 2016 CRA Redevelopment Plan. This CRA Plan can be modeled in other communities.