



# City of Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency

## Redevelopment Area, Boundary Review & Recommendations



Florida Redevelopment Awards  
2019 Category:

**Planning Studies**



# Study Overview

In 2017 and under new leadership, there were several factors that contributed to this study, including a desire for implementing best practices, pending legislative changes that could detrimental impact agencies, redevelopment areas below base year, growing need for redevelopment, faltering community support in some Areas, and a lack of support by Lee County and some members of the City administration, the CRA was had a myriad of challenges in reassessing the future success of redevelopment in Fort Myers.

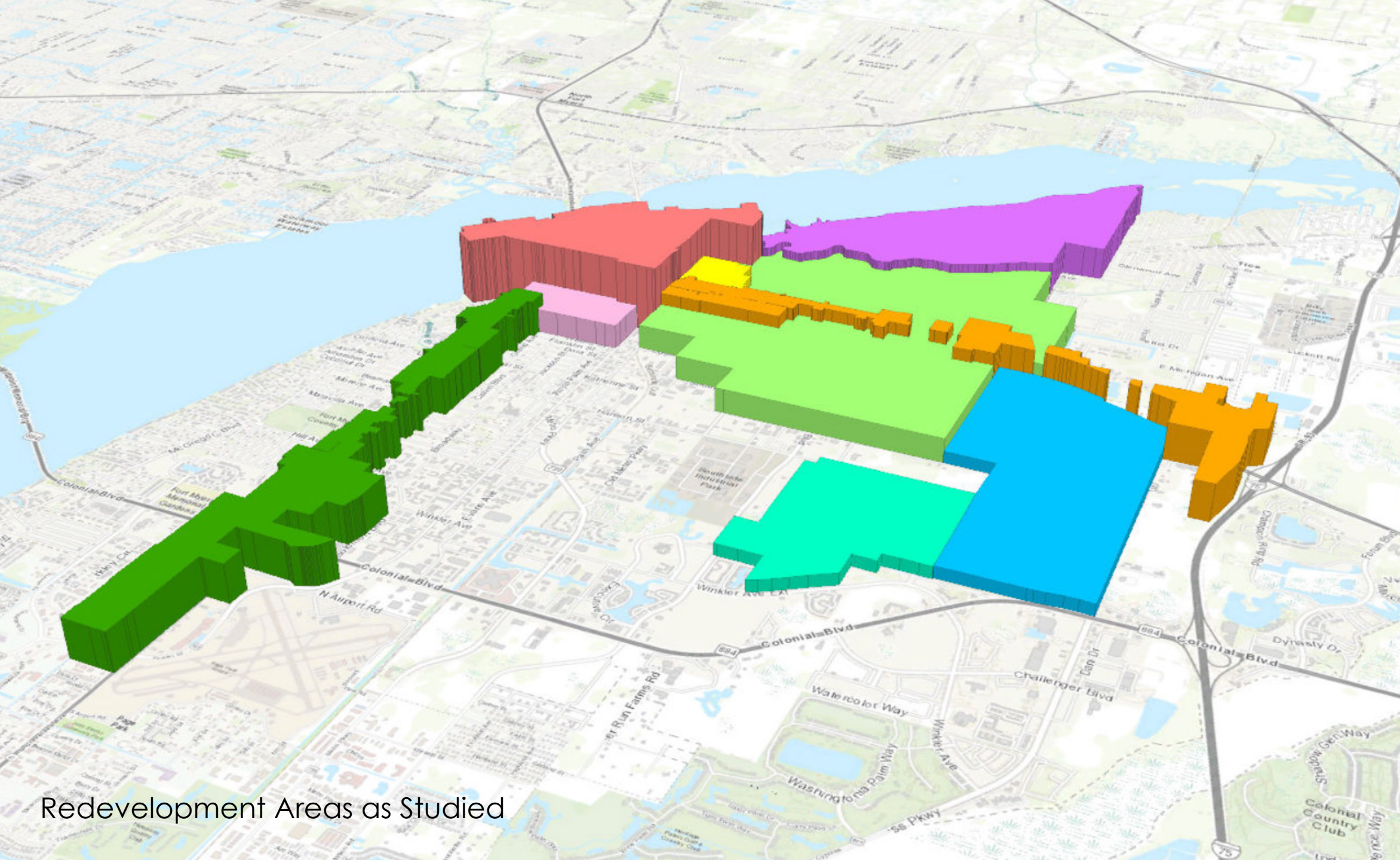
This study was intended to be a tool the CRA could use in future years to strengthen redevelopment in the City with considerations including:

1. Identify redevelopment needs in the City regardless of existing Area boundaries
2. Assess current redevelopment areas for need and effectiveness
3. Analyze relationships between existing Areas and additional areas of need
4. Develop action steps to guide future opportunity for successful redevelopment citywide
5. Ensure City administration would support actions identified
6. Develop a “balance” that could be defended to Lee County

The following slides highlight some of the key conditions within each Area, and the recommendations. Fort Myers Redevelopment Areas Include:

- Central Fort Myers
- Cleveland Avenue
- Downtown
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd
- Dunbar/Michigan
- East Fort Myers
- Eastwood Village
- Velasco Village
- Westwood

[Area Study Document Link](#)



Redevelopment Areas as Studied



# Area Summary

## Opportunities

- Connectivity to downtown, affordability, attractions in place, planned streetscape and utility improvements.

## Constraints

- Tax increment revenue, low rate of owner occupied housing units, high poverty & vacancy rates

## Key Recommendations

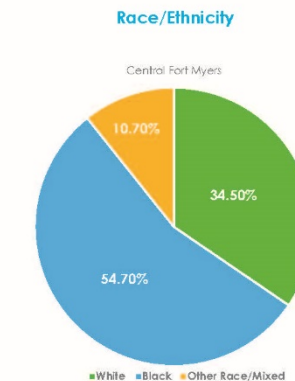
- Either expand the existing Central Fort Myers Area south to Canal Street and east to Fowler Street, or sunset the existing Area and include within an expansion of the Downtown Area.

## Intent

- This expansion will bring the entirety of one of Fort Myers' early neighborhoods within one Area, allow for consistent improvements throughout, better partner with the City on future projects while expanding the uses within the Area, increasing tax increment, and allowing for a Fowler Street corridor improvement plan opportunity.



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, 2010-2014 ACS Estimate, Percentage for ratios below 1.00.



**Housing Units by Occupancy Status and Tenure**

**Total • 411**  
**Occupied • 309**  
**Vacant • 102**

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1, B11. Forecasts for 2017.



# Area Summary

## Opportunities

- High visibility, increment revenue, pending projects, high level of locally owned businesses, pending FDOT roadway improvements.

## Constraints

- Significant revitalization needed, limited/unsafe pedestrian experience, limited business access and parking, deterioration extending into adjacent residential.

# Key Recommendations

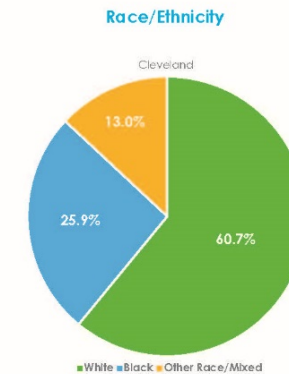
- Extend Sub-Area 1 to include additional blighted residential, extend Sub-Area 2 to include deteriorating commercial, office, and housing, and retain Sub-Areas 3 and 4 as they currently are.

# Intent

- Expansion of Cleveland will enable the CRA to encompass significantly blighted residential uses adjacent to, and contributing to the challenges of the Area, expand affordable housing initiatives, and also include a large area of deteriorating commercial and office uses surrounded on three sides by primary roadways in the City.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, 2010 - 2014 ACS Estimate, Percentage for ratios below 1.00.



**Housing Units by Occupancy Status and Tenure**

**Total • 834**  
**Occupied • 583**  
**Vacant • 251**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1, Esri forecasts for 2017.



# Area Summary

## Opportunities

- Historic character, recognition as a regional destination, significant projects completed, new construction underway.

## Constraints

- Large undeveloped parcels remain, high cost of housing, large daytime workforce, man-made barriers including Fowler Street and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

# Key Recommendations

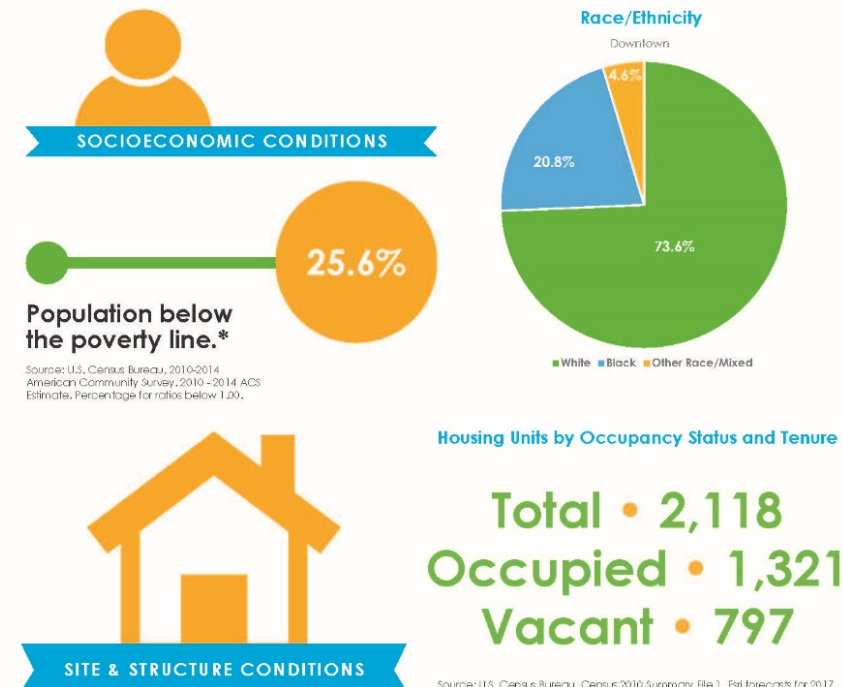
- Expand the Area on the eastern and western ends, consider expanding the southern boundary to include the Central Area and beyond as shown in the Central recommendations.

# Intent

- Bringing both the small eastern and eastern neighborhoods within the Area will unify the residential nineteen-teens development within the Area, and enable the CRA to work with them to achieve similar renaissance as historic Dean Park. Including the Central Area will enable the CRA to quickly begin working on long awaited projects and partner with the City on upcoming streetscape replacement, and subsequent spurring of private development.



Downtown





# Area Summary

## Opportunities

- Access to I-75, primary corridor, recent investments, industrial opportunity, linkage to downtown, surrounded by residential.

## Constraints

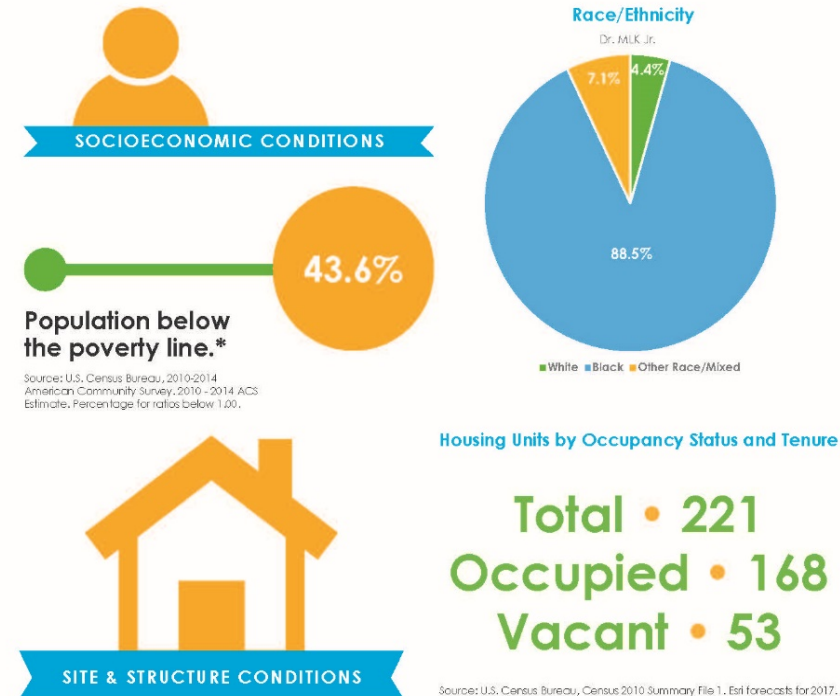
- Limited private investment, limited parcel sizes for commercial or mixed-use towards downtown, industrial uses fronting MLK, limited following of the Revitalization Plan, surrounding neighborhoods some of the poorest in the City.

# Key Recommendations

- Expand the Area to include the Dunbar/Michigan and Velasco Village Areas, expand to include the portion of Eastwood Village fronting the MLK corridor, extend the life of the Area.

# Intent

- An expansion of MLK to include the Dunbar/Michigan Area will enable a more comprehensive redevelopment approach within one redevelopment plan. The corridor relies on these neighborhoods as its consumer base and their long term redevelopment is largely dependent upon one another.





# Area Summary

## Opportunities

- Affordability, proximity to downtown, access to attractions, vacant parcels ideal for development, younger population.

## Constraints

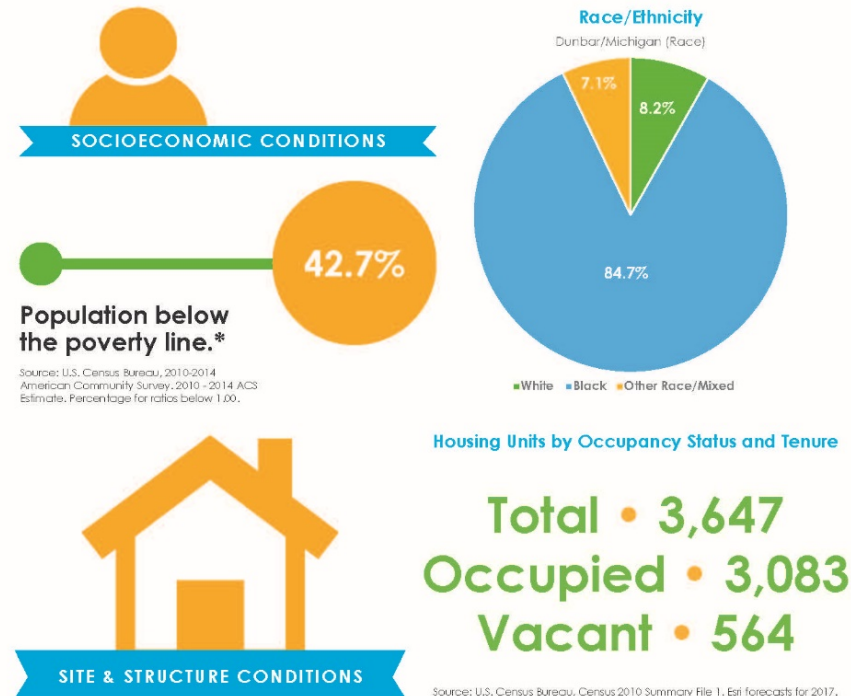
- Large size of the area, limited private investment, significant poverty, has never generated tax increment.

# Key Recommendations

- Sunset the existing redevelopment area and include within the MLK Area expansion with a plan update.

# Intent

- The sun-setting of the Dunbar/Michigan Area and inclusion within the MLK Area will allow this area to have a base year value with opportunity to generate tax increment in upcoming years, and enable a more holistic redevelopment approach with the commercial corridor bisecting it.





# Area Summary

## Opportunities

- Riverfront access, affordability, proximity to downtown, recreational opportunities, diverse resident base, includes a primary corridor.

## Constraints

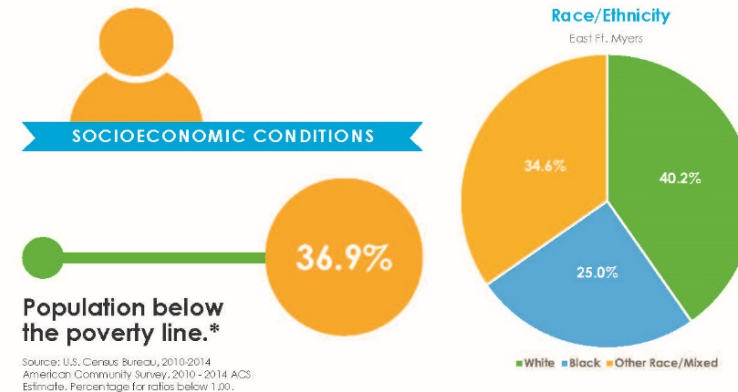
- Large size and need throughout, limited private investment, significant poverty, has never generated tax increment.

# Key Recommendations

- Sunset the Area and re-establish with the same boundaries as currently in place, update the redevelopment plan and extend the life of the Area.

# Intent

- Sun-setting and establishing a new Area designation will allow this area to have a base year value with the opportunity to generate tax increment revenue in upcoming years, to update, and begin implementing the redevelopment plan.



# Area Summary

## Opportunities

- Property under City ownership, access to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, Colonial Blvd., Ortiz Avenue and proximity to I-75, development plans in place.

## Constraints

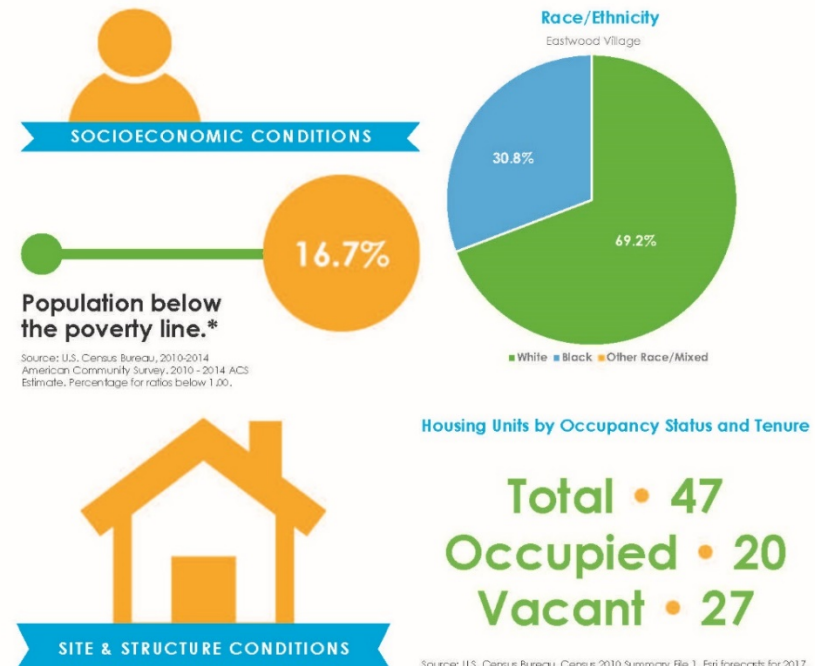
- No active development, and no taxable property.

# Key Recommendations

- Far below base year value and with a change in development plans, the Area should be sunset with the northern portion fronting MLK to be included within the MLK Area expansion.

# Intent

- Tremendously below base year value and with a change in development plans from affordable to market rate housing, there is no need for most of Eastwood Village to be in a redevelopment area. The portion fronting MLK is within the MLK Area expansion and will allow the entirety of the corridor within its plan.





# Area Summary

## Opportunities

- Community participation, previous successful projects, surrounded by established redevelopment areas.

## Constraints

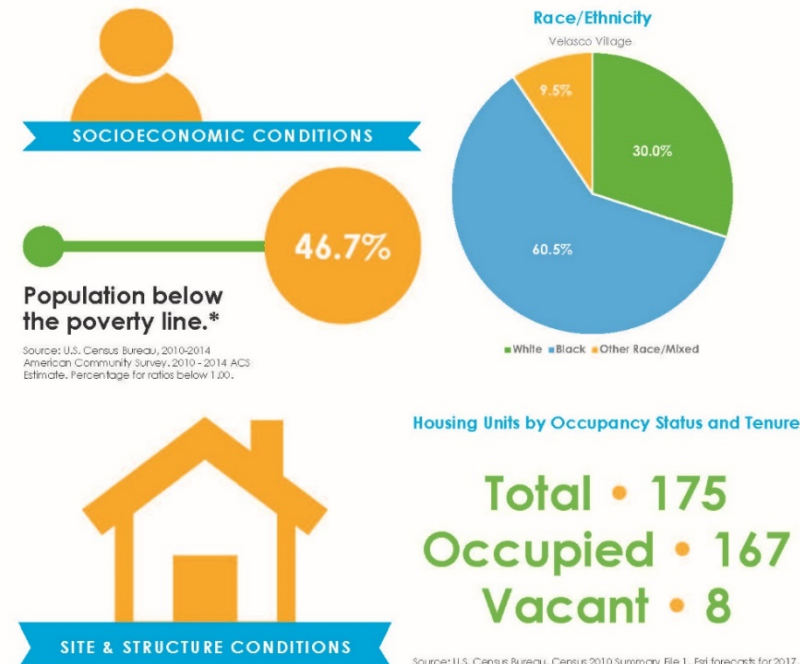
- Low owner occupancy, and high poverty level.

# Key Recommendations

- Allow Velasco Village to expire in 2017 and include within the MLK Area expansion.

# Intent

- Expiring in 2017, including this small neighborhood within the MLK Area expansion will allow it to be included within the overall redevelopment plan for the Dunbar community. Without doing so, Velasco Village would become an enclave surrounded in all directions by redevelopment areas.



# Area Summary

## Opportunities

- Westwood is currently under new development.

## Constraints

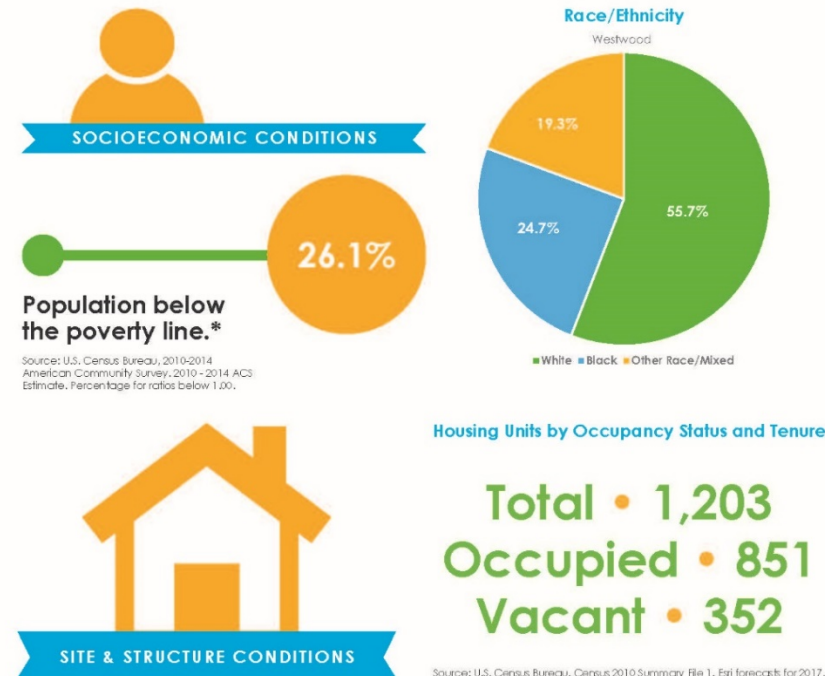
- Westwood has no apparent constraints.

# Key Recommendations

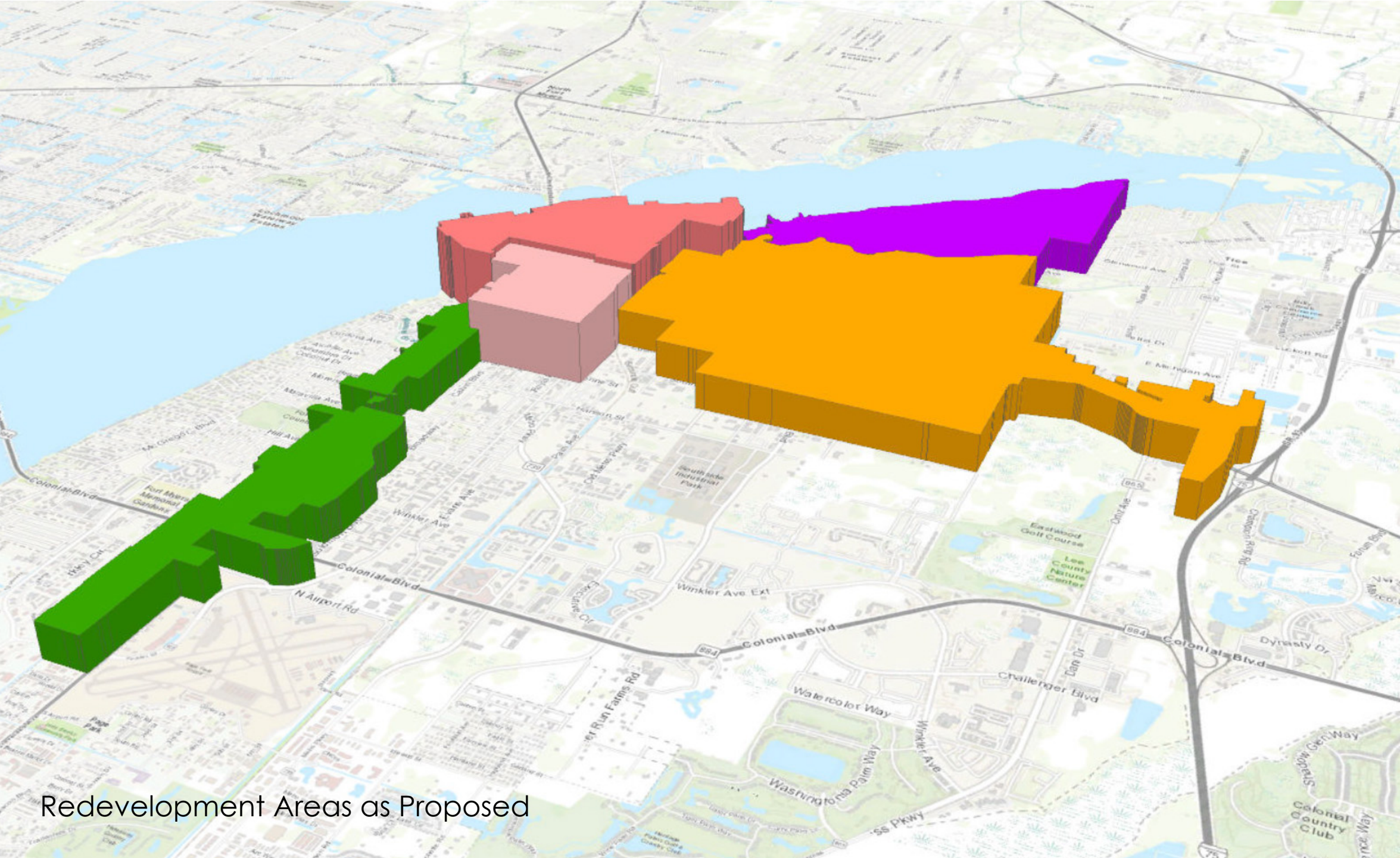
- Sunset the existing redevelopment area.

# Intent

- Westwood Village was successful in its primary redevelopment intent of facilitating land assemblage for ne development. Now largely developed or under development with market rate housing, there is no need for it to remain a redevelopment area.







Redevelopment Areas as Proposed

**Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency  
Redevelopment Area & Boundary Review  
Planning Study Link**