

St. Cloud
2024
ANNUAL
REPORT



St. Cloud
FLORIDA
COMMUNITY
REDEVELOPMENT
AGENCY **CRA**

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THE MISSION

The mission for the CRA is to generate new development, foster revitalization, and garner community investment spurring private development and municipal improvements to enhance the overall quality of life in St. Cloud.

The St. Cloud Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was established in 2005 with the signing of an interlocal agreement between the City of St. Cloud, FL (“City”) and Osceola County. The Agency encompasses an area of slightly over 700 acres, representing approximately 14% of the City’s overall area. When established, the assessed value within the CRA boundaries was \$148,563,458. As of 2023, our taxable value is \$273,382,418, a 15% increase over the previous year, and over \$124.8 million dollars in increased value over the life of the CRA.

OUR BRAND STORY

Whether St. Cloud is your hometown, where life led you, or a home for your business, one thing is certain—it’s at the center of it all. With theme parks, major metropolitan areas and rapidly expanding cities surrounding its borders, St. Cloud is the heart of Central Florida, and it’s that heart that makes it like no other place.

From the moment you cross the city limits, you are enveloped in hometown pride. Festivals and events fill the picturesque lakefront and historic downtown streets, inspiring a tradition of close-knit connections and community. That sense of togetherness can be found in every corner of our city, remaining true to the authentic nature and spirit of life in St. Cloud in the midst of growth and new opportunities. For businesses looking to put down roots, St. Cloud means a prime location with the resources and amenities needed to drive growth.

Here, established businesses share walls with up-and-comers and value community over competition—it’s just our nature. For a young family, it means a safe neighborhood and a big backyard for growing kids. A short drive from everything yet tucked away from the bustle of city life, it’s where your heart can call home.

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY DISTRICTS

The St. Cloud Community Redevelopment Agency is subdivided into three distinct areas or districts, each with its own unique character and individually identified vision and goals. These districts are where the adventure takes place.

The CRA Districts include the City’s main business corridor and impacts the entire City. Members of the City Council and two resident business owners serve on the CRA Board, setting the Agency’s goals and providing direction for staff, with City Manager Veronica Miller serving as Executive Director.

DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

The Downtown District is the social and entertainment hub of the city. It encourages economic vitality and growth with a unique mix of shopping and living experiences. The CRA’s role ensures that redevelopment complements the historic and architecturally significant buildings to a pedestrian- friendly, mixed-use main street environment.

CENTRAL DISTRICT

The Central District provides a welcoming passageway leading into the Downtown and Gateway Districts. The CRA’s goal is to create a traditional urban district with smaller-scaled businesses located close together on smaller lots that enhance the overall image of the CRA area.

GATEWAY DISTRICT

The Gateway District is the western entry point into St. Cloud and the center of major retail activities. The Gateway District to serves as a portal signifying arrival and to establish a unique sense of place with high quality architectural design and signature elements that distinguish the CRA along the U.S. 192 corridor.



FINANCIAL MATTERS

Shown are the financials of the St. Cloud Redevelopment Agency for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024. Although legally separate, the CRA is included as a government fund type component unit into the primary government of the City of St. Cloud. CRA information shown has been extracted from the unaudited City of St. Cloud’s 2023 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.



Revenues

Intergovernmental Revenues (TIF)	\$1,245,931.00
City’s TIF	\$606,959.00
Investment Income	\$168,035.00
Other Revenue	\$18,000.00
Total Revenues	\$2,038,925.00

Expenditures

Other Uses	\$756,397.00
Economic environment	\$935,979.00
Total Expenditures	\$1,692,376.00
(Deficiency) Excess of Revenues (Under)	\$346,549.00

Other Financing Sources (Uses)

Transfers in	\$0
Transfers out	\$756,397.00
Net Change in Fund Balances	\$346,549.00
Fund Balance (Deficit), Beginning of Year, Restated	\$1,102,946.00
Fund Balances, End of Year	\$346,549.00

Balance Sheet (Unaudited)

Prepaid Expenditures and deposits	\$1,580.00
Cash Investments	\$2,835,692.00
Total Assets	\$2,837,272.00
Accounts and Retainage Payable	\$26,044.00
Due to Other Funds	\$1,698,428.00
Accrued Liabilities	\$8,354.00
Deposits Payable	\$1,500.00
Total Liabilities	\$1,734,326.00
Nonspendable	\$1,580.00
Restricted:	\$1,101,366.00
Total Fund Balances	\$1,102,946.00
Total Liabilities and Fund Balances	\$2,837,272.00



PROJECTS

P3 MIXED-USE PROJECT

Due to increased activity in the entertainment district of the Downtown CRA and the ongoing construction associated with the Downtown Revitalization Phase II Project, lack of parking has become an issue. The CRA has assembled several parcels of land for the purpose of development via public private partnership in the construction of a mixed-use parking garage project. In the past year, the CRA performed its due diligence including geotechnical surveys, appraisal, proposal development and identification of funding for incentives. In 2024, city-owned the property located on Massachusetts Avenue was demolished, and the project went out for bid solicitation in August this year. The CRA has budgeted \$1,090,346.14 for this project.

P3s enable the skills and assets of each sector (public and private) to be shared in delivering a service or facility for the public use, with each sharing in the risks and rewards.



Demolition of 803 Mass Ave

The RFP for this project closed on October 31, and after review, rejection of the bid was recommended. The CRA board directed to re-issue the bid.

City owned homes at 803, 807 and 811 Massachusetts Ave were demolished on 11/6/2024 as developer incentive.

900 OHIO AVE & LEASE OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SITE

In September 2003, the CRA purchased a residential property (900 Ohio Avenue in the Downtown District) for \$425,000 with the intent of creating additional parking in the future. The CRA currently leases the adjoining lot at 1000 Ohio Avenue from the local church for overflow parking.

The tenant notified the CRA that the property will be vacated in December of this year. The intention of the CRA upon vacation of the property is to convert the house into a commercial property.

While the property site at 900 Ohio Ave is a residential property, this project does not qualify as affordable housing. Currently, the CRA has not spent funds on affordable housing projects.



Downtown Phase II Revitalization Project: Pennsylvania Avenue



Downtown Phase II Revitalization Project: Pennsylvania Avenue

DOWNTOWN PHASE II REVITALIZATION PROJECT: PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

The Downtown Revitalization Phase II project has been completed. The project scope included the upgrade of water and sewer lines, sidewalk expansion, installation of brick pavers, addition of decorative street lighting and other ancillary improvements.

Earlier this year, the city and the project contractor entered mediation and reached an agreement on closing the project. The city brought in another contractor to remove the bricks on 10th Street (many were saved for future phases and maintenance) and paved the street with asphalt. The city brick maintenance crew has been hard at work repairing the other brick roads in the downtown area.

WAYFINDING SIGNAGE STUDY

The City of St. Cloud and its CRA is undertaking major streetscape projects within their historic downtown area. As part of these downtown efforts, the CRA proposed to replace and expand their current system of wayfinding signs. The new system will include an updated design palette and wayfinding logic, and is anticipated to include vehicular, pedestrian, and kiosk style signs. The CRA board approved the design package to be used as a bid document for future solicitation of a sign manufacturing company to prepare detailed construction shop drawings, fabrication, and installation of the signs. The CRA has budgeted \$50,000 for this project.

The addition of an archway has been added to the design scope. Staff is currently vetting the ideal location for an arch that seeks to welcome visitors to the city. The CRA is currently analyzing the best possibilities for the arch location. Once the location has been identified, the CRA will move forward with the design stage that seeks to be in accordance with the previously approved orientation system.

ALLEYWAY IMPROVEMENTS STUDY

The CRA has engaged a consultant to prepare a planning study for the improvement of the alleys in downtown St. Cloud. The purpose of this study is to promote a more walkable environment with enhanced shopping, dining, and entertainment experiences for residents and visitors within downtown. The alley improvement study process involves strategically examining the existing built environment, the City’s improvement plans for the downtown area including the proposed parking garage and Florida Avenue trail, and other anticipated development activities.

The study was completed early Spring of 2024 and the CRA received a cost estimate of \$1,525,250 for this project. The CRA has budgeted \$500,000 so far.

CENTENNIAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The city has undertaken initial discussions and planning efforts for Centennial Park, estimated to cost approximately \$2 million. The master plan design and proposed improvements are to meet downtown businesses aspirations, create a sense of pride for City residents, and serve as a landmark. This project aligns with the CRA goal of creating new open space features that will enhance the general downtown environment and contribute to a higher level of usage.

The project will be carried out in two different phases. The first phase will be the design and construction of a public restroom facility located at the open lot adjacent to Centennial Park at the corner of 10th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. The facility is anticipated to be approximately +2,000 sq. ft. and have both men, women, and unisex/facility facilities to meet the increasing demand during public events. The CRA has budgeted \$100,000 for this project.



Centennial Park Improvements



Centennial Park Improvements



PUBLIC ARTS PROGRAM

Public art not only enriches the cultural landscape of a community, but it also serves as a catalyst for economic growth and community development. The CRA seeks to embrace and invest in public art initiatives, with the mission of cultivating a vibrant and dynamic environment that attracts tourists, support local businesses, artists, and fosters a sense of identity among residents.

MURALS

In April 2024, the City of St. Cloud CRA board approved an agreement with Osceola Arts ARTisNow Public Murals Project with the goal to transform and improve public spaces. The program seeks to provide new ways of looking at the art as a powerful force to inspire community dialogue, and community development, and celebrate local culture while transforming and revitalizing public spaces adding color, vibrancy and character.

The program duration is for 3 years, and within that timeframe, Osceola Arts will conceptualize, plan and implement innovative and interesting public art murals. The budgeted amount for this project is \$180,000.

To date, one mural has been completed, and a second one is in progress.

UTILITY BOXES

The CRA is in the beginning stages of its utility boxes wrap project. There were over 15 utility boxes identified within the US192 CRA corridor, and after obtaining instructions from the Florida Department of Transportation, the CRA is analyzing possible collaborations to identify artists that will be participating in the design of the project.



Utility boxes identified for artist wrap

Public art is a particularly important tool to serve as a tangible expression of creativity, identity, and storytelling that transforms an ordinary space into experiences that turn into memories.



Special Entertainment District

ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT SIDEWALK MARKING

The City's Downtown Entertainment District is a one-stop destination for shopping, dining and entertainment, all within a comfortable walking distance within our quaint downtown. Downtown St. Cloud features beautiful brick streets, streets, wide sidewalks, lush landscaping, and decorative lighting. In the Special Entertainment District, visitors can purchase special cups that permit the public consumption of alcohol, available at most downtown bars and restaurants.

The CRA is seeking to install sidewalk marking to the boundaries of the entertainment district to enhance the experience of visitors. In this initial phase of the project, the CRA is analyzing the possible marking options available as well as a design that goes accordingly to the City's character and the cost of this project.

BUSINESS TAX REGISTRATION PROGRAM

The CRA started offering one-time grants to businesses looking to move into the CRA. Whether it's a pop-up or storefront, home based or office suite, the CRA is a perfect location for small businesses to grow as well as new businesses to start. The program reimburses businesses that are applying for or may possess their local city and county business tax receipt, up to \$100. To date, there have been 12 businesses awarded (totaling \$939), which equates to 12 new businesses relocated into the CRA. The budgeted amount is \$5,000 per year.

BUILDING SITE IMPROVEMENT GRANT

The Building and Site Improvement Grant (BSIG) Program is available for façade improvements for buildings located within any of the three CRA Districts. The grant program is a matching grant program that funds 50% of eligible expenses. Grant awards are based on building square footage and range from up to \$10,000 to \$65,000. Eligible Projects must be for façade improvements to a building or properties that are permanent or could be described as "beautification" projects that are visible (street-facing) portions of structure or site. In 2024, the CRA awarded \$10,000 to rehabilitate an historic retail shop. The scope of work includes exterior painting, awning replacement, new windows & doors, and wall repair.

Since Inception, there have been 64 grants awarded totaling \$769,154.37. Annually, the CRA budgets \$100,000 for this grant program.



Building and Site Improvement Grant (BSIG) Program storefront before improvements



Building and Site Improvement Grant (BSIG) Program storefront after improvements

PLANT PAINT PAVE PROGRAM

The Paint, Plant, and Pave grant program launched early 2022. The program was created to immediately enhance the aesthetics of single-family and multi-family 2-unit properties within the residential neighborhoods of the St. Cloud CRA Downtown area and to improve curb appeal. The CRA offers up to \$2,000 per property for exterior improvements. In 2024, there were 6 homes renovated under this program.



Before and After Photos of Homes Improved by the Plant Paint Pave Program

COMMUNITY POLICING & CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

The St. Cloud Police Department (SCPD), in partnership with the CRA, developed an innovative comprehensive program to improve the actual and perceived security of the entertainment district within the CRA. Area residents, businesses, customers, and tourists are part of the ongoing effort to the Downtown District a destination location. Through its agreement, SCPD provided enhanced policing services including crime prevention through environmental design surveys and training (CPTED), building safety inspections and reports, intelligence-led policing, consulting on new commercial developments and meeting with community stakeholders such as the Downtown Business Group and Monthly Market Subcommittee.



THE COMMERCIAL RENT REIMBURSEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

The Commercial Rent Reimbursement Grant Program is designed to help facilitate the establishment of new businesses. The program was adopted by City Council in September and is designed to

provide financial assistance to new and existing businesses in the form of rent reimbursement intended to help businesses during the critical first year of operation or expansion.

The program offers financial assistance through a reimbursable grant in the form of a monthly rent reimbursement for the first 6 months of business with the option to request an additional 6 months of reimbursement, which may be granted at the discretion of the City Council. This grant is funded by and in partnership with the Office of Economic Development to recruit target industries and therefore, increase the tax base of the CRA.

PROPERTY TAX REFUND PROGRAM

This grant is funded is funded by and in partnership with the Office of Economic Development to recruit target industries and therefore, increase the tax base of the CRA.

The Property Tax Refund Program is a reimbursable, performance-based incentive providing grants up to 100% of property tax for up to 10 years. Grant amounts are contingent on the number of jobs created in target industries (medical/healthcare, manufacturing, IT, life sciences, aerospace) with high wage/high quality jobs and larger capital expenditures that contribute to the tax base. Applicant must create at least 10 new FTE jobs (at 115% of the county’s average annual wage) and make a minimum \$5 million capital investment. This a new program funded by the office of economic development.

PEDICABS

Pedicabs have become an increasingly popular form of transportation and as a result, the City Council has authorized the operation in March pedicabs within the CRA boundaries. Pedicabs will offer pedestrians a great way to get around the different destinations of the City.

PROGRAMS

The complimentary technical assistance programs offered to CRA businesses are a powerful resource for entrepreneurs that want to grow their company and find new contract opportunities.

HOW TO DO BUSINESS IN ST. CLOUD

In April the city hosted a how to do business in St. Cloud expo in which business owners were learned about the different resources available in the area.



ACCESS TO CAPITAL, “SHOW ME THE MONEY” EXPO

In September the city hosted the first access to capital expo in which business owners connected with banks and CFI’s. The EXPO provided financial and other funding resources for business owners to invest in new opportunities, expand operations and increase revenue and profitability.



PROSPERA

In February the city partnered with Prospera for a how to start a business workshop. This event offered the opportunity to learn on how to start a business. The event was targeted to the Hispanic community and provided in Spanish.

FURTHER YOUR REACH

The workshop hosted in June was in partnership with the Central Florida International Trade Office, with the purpose of helping local grow global. The workshop provided information on how to grow business sales, gain new customers, and expand business globally.

CONNECT RESOURCES FOR BUSINESS GROWTH SERIES

The Connect Resources for Business Growth Series started this year with the purpose of providing resources and valuable information to new and existing businesses in the City of St. Cloud, to stimulate economic growth. The series of webinars present different community partners in the sessions and business owners can choose which one to attend. The first webinar took place in November 2024, and the frequency of the webinars are expected to be monthly or quarterly depending on the number on the community partners participating per year.

ELEVATOR PITCH UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA (UCF) INCUBATOR PROGRAM

The goal of this workshop was to help St. Cloud business owners to build a business pitch that showcase their business' unique value proposition to potential investors partners and customers. City of St. Cloud together with the UCF Business Incubator program has developed a two-day business pitch training that helped CRA business owners and entrepreneurs to create a clear brief message about their business, communicate the business idea and what the business owner is looking for, and be confident and persuasive in their message delivery.



AWARDS

ECONOMIC GARDENING PROGRAM ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AWARD

The Florida League of Cities Florida Municipal Achievement Awards Program provides municipalities the opportunity to receive deserved recognition for outstanding and innovative efforts in different categories. This year the City of St. Cloud received the Economic Advancement Award and IEDC Excellence in Economic Development Bronze Award for its Economic Gardening Program.

The Downtown Economic Gardening Program was an innovative, multi-layered suite of financial and technical assistance programs offered for businesses effected by the pandemic and prolonged construction of the city's streetscape project. Many businesses were facing closure.

The program was launched to support the small and midsize businesses by providing resources to assist in business continuity and sustainability, while plagued with lack of sales. The program offered \$190,000 in assistance including grants, technical support, fee waivers and marketplace information which is important as the recipients were CRA businesses.



