



Community Redevelopment Agency

2014-15 Annual Report

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2014-15 (October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015) was a successful and productive year for the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA). This annual report provides a brief highlight of the programs and activities supported by the CRA. The report also provides a brief financial overview of the CRA Trust Fund.



CRA BOARD MEMBERS

Jason Evans (Chair)

Scott Jamison (Vice Chair)

Gloria James

Byron Williams

Sue Weller

CRA STAFF

**Amanda Rodriguez (CRA Executive
Director)**

HIGH SPRINGS CHARTER OFFICERS

Ed Booth (City Manager)

Jenny Parham (City Clerk)

**Courtney Johnson (Assistant City
Attorney)**



Façade Grants

In fiscal year 2013-14, the CRA focused its matching façade grant towards both residential grants and commercial grants. The matching grants were used to assist in mitigating blight, increasing tax assessed values, and for improved public safety. For every dollar that the CRA put towards the facades, the property owner also contributed at least one dollar. The CRA awarded and dispersed \$2,000 to residents and \$41,911.53 to businesses. By leveraging CRA funds as matching grants, over \$87,823.06 was invested into the CRA district.

Residential:

\$1,000 to Barrows Residence received a matching grant for new windows.



\$1000 to Galipeau Residence received a matching grant for new paint.





Commercial:

\$18,106.49 was awarded to David Graham Insurance Law for a complete façade renovation. David Graham Insurance Law is located in a home that is over 100 years old. The complete façade renovation included windows, siding, doors, and new paint. The company also renovated the entire interior including businesses offices and a separate living space.

\$9660 was awarded to Antique Centre of High Springs for new façade including awning repair and new paint. Antique Centre

The Additional Commercial Recipients include Talk of the Town Hair Salon, McCall's Television Sales and Service, High Springs Playhouse, Edward Jones, High Springs City Boys, and Hair and Nail Depot.



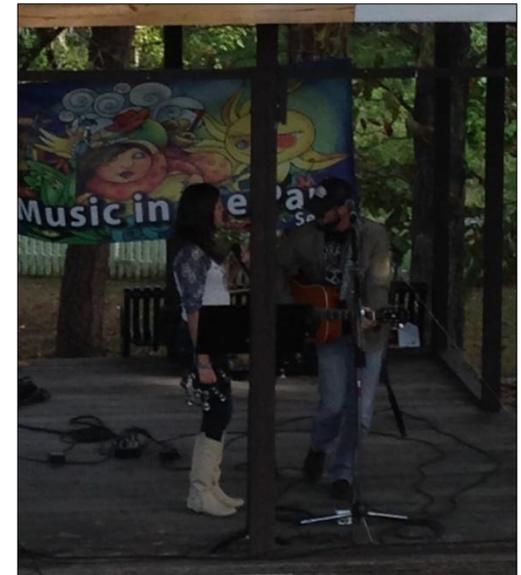


Downtown Parking

Adequate downtown parking is essential to the growth of a vital, thriving downtown. As such, the CRA continues a three year project to create adequate parking not only for today but for the future as well. On street parking was added to NW 1st Street to provide over 40 new parking spots. The parking spaces have proven to be utilized daily as they provide easy, safe access to all of the downtown businesses.

Music in the Park

Music in the Park is a cultural program that highlights the unique sound of local folk musicians. High Springs is home to many talented and vibrant folk musicians. Monthly, local musicians play in James Paul Park for between 60-150 residents and visitors. In September, Music in the Park hosts Folk in the Springs. Folk in the Springs is a music festival played at eight venues throughout the CRA district. This year, over 1,000 people attended the event. Music in the Park was also an integral part of Pioneer Days. For Pioneer Days, over eight artists performed over two days to over 15,000 visitors. The entire amount spent for Music in the Park was \$1,500. For a \$1,500 investment, over 17,000 residents and visitors came to the CRA district, purchasing from our stores and eating in our restaurants.





Community Wide Collaboration

The CRA was involved in several community wide events and programs. The CRA partnered with the Chamber of Commerce on Pioneer Days and the Christmas Parade, the Community Development Corporation for the Christmas Tree Lighting, the Historic Society for the High Springs Historic Society, the High Springs Police Department for National Night Out, and the Farmer's Market. By partnering with established community organizations, the CRA was able to contribute to the district without spending any CRA funds.





Promotion

The CRA partnered with the City of High Springs and CGI Communications to produce several promotional videos on the City of High Springs Website. The CRA also worked closely with all local media outlets, including newspapers, magazines, television, and web based outlets to better promote the activities, businesses, and events happening in the district.

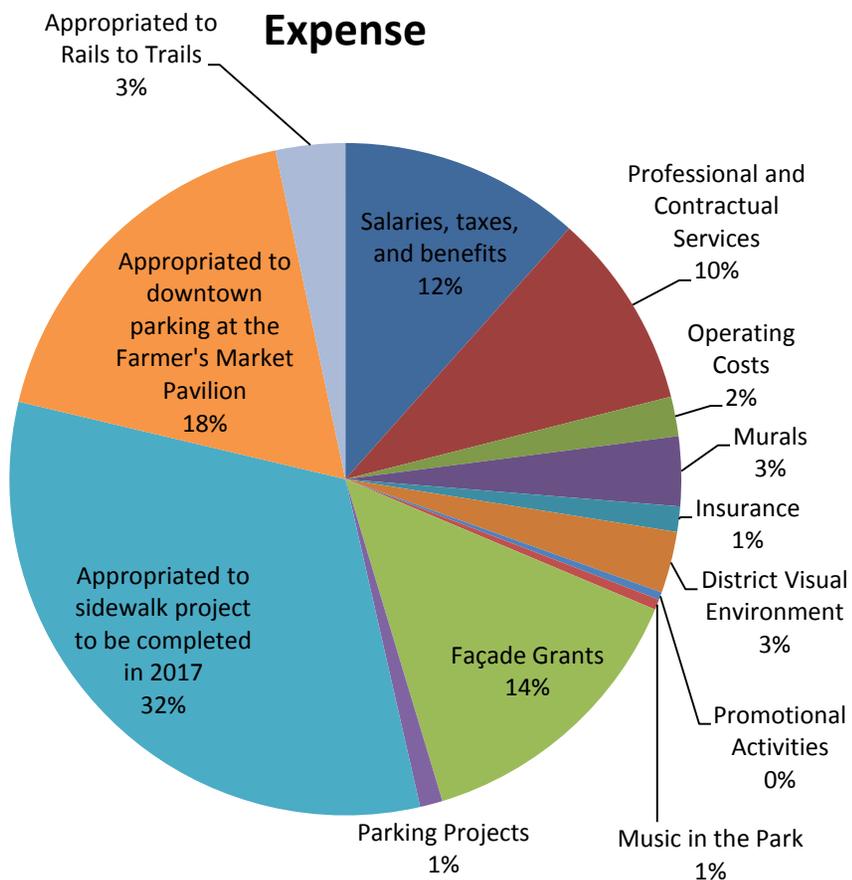
Financials

The CRA is funded primarily through tax increment financing (TIF). TIF is a unique tool available to CRA for redevelopment and the implementation of the adopted Plan. The TIF funds come from the citizens and businesses in the district through the taxes paid to Alachua County and the City of High Springs.

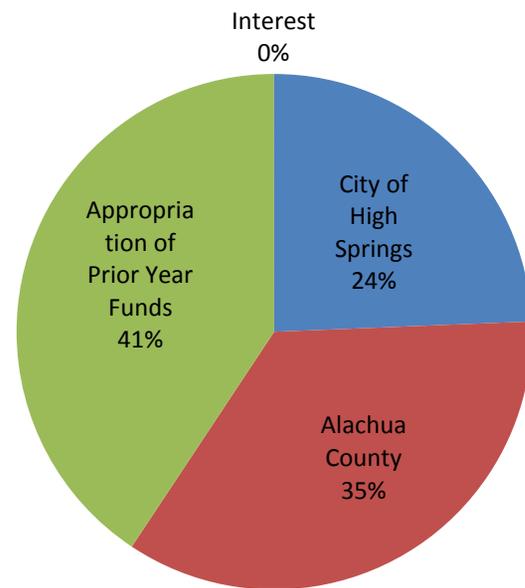
For fiscal year 2013-14, City of High Springs TIF was \$72,933 and Alachua County TIF was \$104,643. Total expenses were \$177,615.75. The remaining balance was placed in the Downtown Parking Project, Downtown Sidewalk Project, and Rails to Trails. The official budget and financial audit can be found on the City of High Springs Website or at City Hall.



Expense



Income





Looking forward towards 2015-16 and beyond

In 2015 and 2016, we will be continuing to provide the highest redevelopment services to the CRA district. This year, the CRA continued on several three year goals that will run through September 2016. We are more than half way in and have completed several of the goals. The eight goals are:

1. Providing façade matching grants to businesses and homeowners within CRA district.

The amount budgeted for 2014-15 was \$60,000. The total awarded was \$54,816.25. The total actually distributed was \$43,911.53. The amount budgeted for 2015-16 is \$60,000

2. Continued construction and improvement of parking spaces within the district.

Restriping of the parking lots in front of the Old School, NW First Street and Railroad Avenue has occurred. Additional parking will be added at the farmer’s market pavilion to be completed in Summer 2016.

3. Repainting of the Downtown Murals.

The two existing murals were completed in December 2015 by local artist Bryan Barkman. The murals reflect the unique history and culture of High Springs and help to promote the CRA district. Additional murals will be placed in the district and will promote other aspects of High Springs.

4. Utilizing new and innovative mediums to promote the CRA district and businesses.

The CRA has and will continue to promote the district through print, virtual media, and networking.

5. Drafting, adopting, and implementing a CRA 30 Year Extension Plan for the CRA District.

The process is on schedule. The new extension plan will replace the original CRA Plan founded in December 1986. The new plan will go into effect in October 2016 and will run through September 2046.

6. Promotion and Coordination of established and new events in the CRA District.

The 2014-15 events included Music in the Park, Pioneer Days, the High Springs Museum, the Farmer’s Market, National Night Out, and the Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting.

7. The renovation of downtown sidewalks in conjunction with the Florida Department of Transportation.

FDOT will complete there resurfacing of Main Street in early 2017. We will begin on the downtown sidewalks shortly thereafter.

8. Partnering with the City of High Springs, CSX, Alachua County, and the State of Florida to establish a “Rails to Trails” in the CRA District.

The project is moving along on scheduled.