

FY 2023

# ANNUAL REPORT



**PANAMA CITY**  
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY







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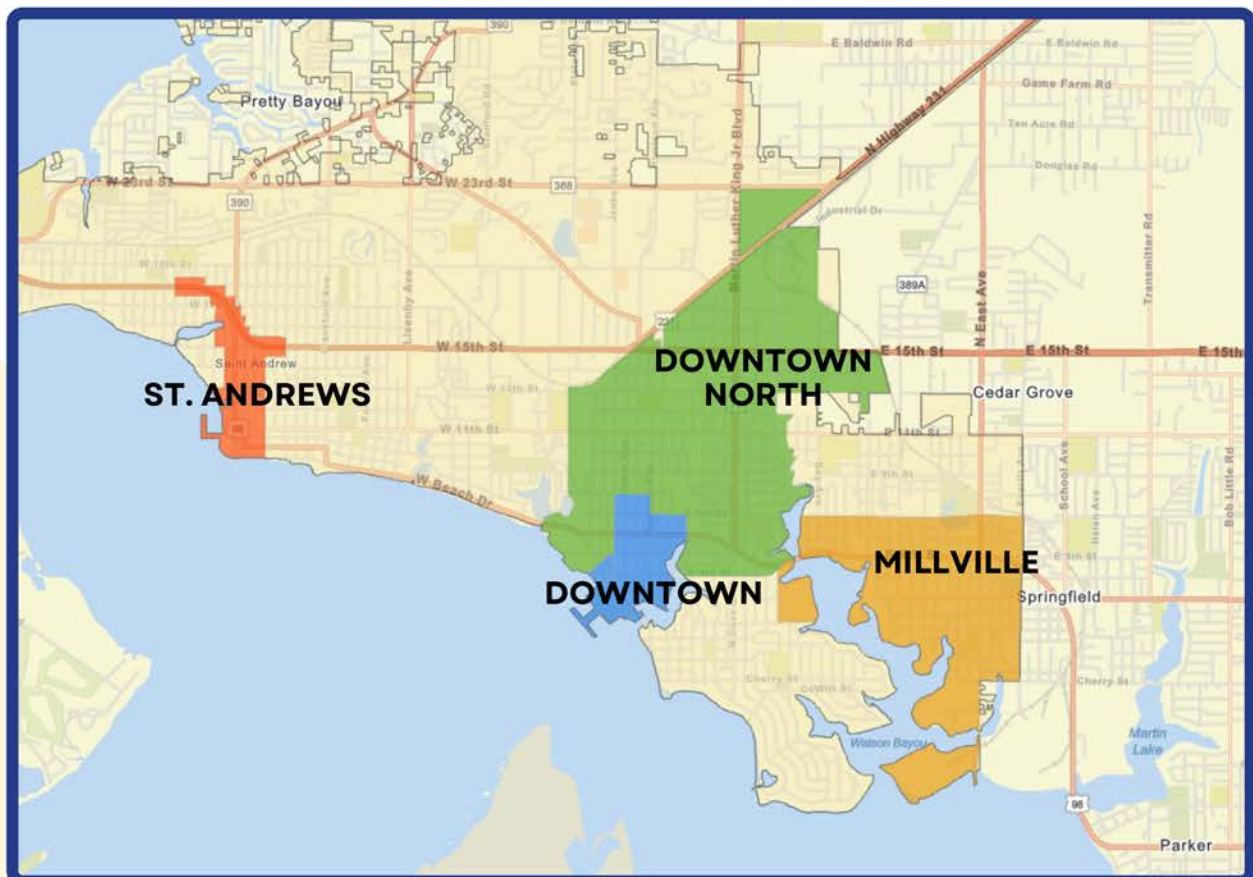
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# ABOUT CRA

The Panama City Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) remains steadfast in its commitment to revitalizing our community, enhancing economic opportunities, and improving the quality of life for residents and businesses alike. Through strategic investments, collaborative partnerships, and innovative initiatives, the CRA continues to make meaningful progress toward achieving our shared vision of a vibrant and sustainable community for all.

The CRA consists of four districts: Downtown, St. Andrews, Downtown North, and Millville. Each district collects property taxes paid within that district and must expend those funds within the district they were paid in accordance with the adopted CRA Plans.



# CRA BOARD

The City of Panama City Mayor and Commissioners also serve as the CRA Board.

In 2023, we welcomed three new Board Members: Chairman Michael X. Rohan, Sr., Board Member Janice Lucas, and Board Member Brian Grainger.

Returning this year are Board Members Jenna Haligas and Josh Street.



**Michael X. Rohan, Sr.**  
Chairman



**Jenna Haligas**  
Board Member



**Janice Lucas**  
Board Member



**Brian Grainger**  
Board Member



**Josh Street**  
Board Member



# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Residents of Panama City,

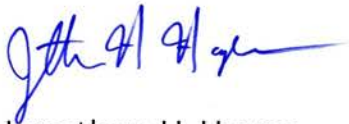
We are delighted to provide an update on the endeavors and advancements of the Panama City Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) for the fiscal year 22/23. Mandated by Florida Statutes 163 Part III, this Annual Report serves to inform our community and partners of our progress.

The primary objective of the CRA is to identify local areas impacted by the detrimental effects of slum and blight, subsequently revitalizing them into vibrant hubs of social and economic vitality. This involves crafting a comprehensive CRA plan in collaboration with the community and methodically executing these plans to enhance the economic landscape and living conditions. Panama City comprises four designated CRA Areas: Downtown, Downtown North, Millville, and St. Andrews.

Central to the CRA's mission is the restoration of an environment conducive to new investments and growth, thereby enhancing the social and environmental fabric of our community and gradually mitigating blighted conditions prevalent in certain areas.

Throughout this year, significant transformations unfolded across all four districts, marked by shifts in leadership and strategy. Following years of resilience in the aftermath of hurricanes and pandemics, Panama City is now starting to reap the rewards of its endeavors. The Board's deliberate emphasis on capital improvement projects outlined within CRA district plans has catalyzed the commencement of long-awaited initiatives. Moreover, this renewed focus has spurred the generation of fresh ideas and strategies to address evolving needs. Whether refining existing concepts or devising innovative solutions, the CRA eagerly embraces its pivotal role in helping Panama City become the Premier City in the Panhandle.

Sincerely,



Jonathan H. Hayes  
City of Panama City  
CRA Executive Director

# DISTRICT TIMELINES



1989

St. Andrews District Established



1984

Downtown District Established



1993

Downtown North District Established



2004

Millville District Established



# FINANCIALS

## CRA REVENUES

	<u>City TIF</u>	<u>County TIF</u>	<u>Carry Forward</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
St. Andrews	\$301,132	\$290,862	\$579,542	<b>\$1,171,536</b>
Downtown	\$178,882	\$172,782	\$45,825	<b>\$397,489</b>
Downtown North	\$384,790	\$376,730	\$25,567	<b>\$787,087</b>
Millville	\$267,753	\$258,621	\$417,544	<b>\$943,918</b>

## CRA EXPENSES

	<u>Administrative</u>	<u>Operations</u>	<u>Capital Projects</u>	<u>Grants</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
St. Andrews	\$96,131	\$242,108	\$351,027	\$0	<b>\$689,266</b>
Downtown	\$45,283	\$168,406	\$19,143	\$166,518	<b>\$399,350</b>
Downtown North	\$72,773	\$243,546	\$46,690	\$103,847	<b>\$466,856</b>
Millville	\$71,268	\$119,053	\$36,530	\$4,905	<b>\$231,756</b>

## OTHER FINANCIALS

	<u>Base Year Values</u>	<u>FY 23 Values</u>	<u>Affordable Housing Expenses</u>
St. Andrews	\$15,932,884	\$81,971,967	\$0
Downtown	\$26,787,527	\$66,016,945	\$0
Downtown North	\$130,695,931	\$215,081,521	\$6,724
Millville	\$42,398,300	\$101,117,247	\$3,455





# CRA REVIEW

In December 2022, the CRA enlisted the Emerald Coast Regional Council (ECRC) to conduct a comprehensive review of the CRA district plans and assess the activities undertaken by the four districts over the past four years. The resulting report outlined three key recommendations: updating all CRA district plans, implementing comprehensive policies and procedures governing all aspects of CRA operations, and ensuring the availability of all statutorily required information on the CRA's webpage and in annual reports.

Since receiving this report, the CRA has been diligently working towards fulfilling the objectives outlined by ECRC. The process commenced with the conversion of all available paper documentation, both historical and current, into digital format, securely stored for enhanced accessibility. Moreover, all existing and forthcoming programs, agreements, and contracts undergo meticulous review by the City's legal office before being presented to the CRA Board for approval. Additionally, changes in leadership led to the replacement of three CRA board members, with a subsequent public workshop convened to provide training for new members and facilitate open discussions regarding the future focus and direction of the CRA.

Furthermore, significant updates have been made to the CRA's webpage, ensuring easy access to statutorily required documentation for the public. The Agency also adopted an updated purchasing policy to allow for more transparency and safeguards in the use of CRA funds. Looking ahead, the CRA aims to continue its efforts towards compliance with ECRC recommendations by adopting City policies as necessary and updating all four CRA district plans to incorporate statutory updates, thereby ensuring continued alignment with regulatory requirements and best practices.

*Project Cost: \$10,401*

## Quality of Life

All four CRA districts have allocated resources to sustain ongoing beautification endeavors for CRA properties, utilizing both CRA maintenance personnel and third-party contractors. In a bid to ensure uniformity and elevate maintenance standards, the CRA has collaborated with the Panama City Quality of Life Department (QoL) to oversee landscaping, hardscaping, and general upkeep. This partnership extends to maintaining key locations such as the A.D. Harris Learning Village in Downtown North and the Publishing Museum in St. Andrews. Additionally, QoL assumes responsibility for maintaining gateway signs and diligently attends to sidewalks and trash receptacles within specified areas of each CRA district. QoL's overarching objective is to enhance the level of service provided across all CRA districts.

*Project Cost: \$336,033*

## World Changers

For the seventh consecutive year, the CRA has collaborated with the World Changers Organization to facilitate exterior repairs for homes in the Downtown North and Millville Districts. Consistent with past initiatives, the CRA financed the materials utilized by student volunteers organized by World Changers. These volunteers dedicated their efforts to tasks such as yard cleanup, repairing and painting exterior walls and porches, constructing ramps for improved safety and accessibility, and addressing various other repair needs. This year, a total of 13 homes in the CRAs underwent improvements through this program. The recipients of these services, who would otherwise struggle to afford such essential enhancements and are ineligible for alternative grant programs, greatly benefit from this assistance. The ongoing success of this annual endeavor underscores its vital contribution to the CRA's overarching objectives to eliminate slum and blight and increase property values in our districts.

*Project Cost: \$10,571*







## Harrison Ave. Streetscape

In 2023, the City of Panama City pressed ahead with the Harrison Avenue Streetscapes project, focusing on phase one, stretching from Government Street to the forthcoming Four Points Plaza. Construction-related road closures along Harrison Avenue posed challenges for businesses on both sides of the street. In response, the CRA stepped in, providing four 4' x 25' banners declaring these merchants as "Open for Business." Strategically placed across Harrison Avenue and on building facades, these banners aimed to draw attention to the ongoing vitality of downtown shops and restaurants, encouraging continued patronage despite infrastructure improvements in progress.

Phase one of the Harrison Avenue Streetscapes project reached completion in November 2023, just in time for the festive Christmas season. Phase two is slated to extend from the Four Points Plaza at 4th Street to the downtown gateway at 6th Street. Anticipated to finish by May 2025, phase two will carry forward the efforts to enhance and beautify this historic district, ensuring its appeal and vibrancy for residents and visitors alike.

*Project Cost: \$2,193*





## Downtown Breezeway

Ahead of phase two of the Harrison Avenue Streetscapes project, the City and CRA recognized the necessity of establishing a thoroughfare linking Harrison Avenue to the CRA / Downtown Improvement Board-owned parking lots on Grace Avenue. To address this need, the City secured 447 Harrison Avenue, strategically located midway between 4th and 5th Streets. The CRA initiated phase one of the transformation of this nearly century-old building into the new Downtown Breezeway. Collaborating with Public Works, they constructed an interior, open-air breezeway utilizing the existing front and back entryways to facilitate pedestrian passage. The building's exterior underwent rejuvenation with a fresh coat of paint, while plans were laid out for murals to adorn the front, back, and interior walls.

Phase two of the project will commence once phase two of the Harrison Avenue Streetscapes project nears completion, ensuring uninterrupted access to businesses along Harrison Avenue during road construction. Phase one of the Downtown Breezeway is slated for completion in the first quarter of 2024, with subsequent plans for phase two aimed at revitalizing the remainder of this once-neglected vacant storefront, breathing new life into the area. The updated building will include public restrooms and small retail shops for start-up businesses. This initiative aligns with the CRA Downtown District plan, prioritizing safety and community engagement.

*Phase 1 Project Cost: \$39,290*  
*2023 Expensed Funds: \$19,994*  
*Phase 2 Anticipated Cost: \$500,000*





# DOWNTOWN (CONT.)

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## McKenzie Park Public Restrooms



Public restrooms stand as vital amenities in any downtown area, often serving as the cornerstone of community convenience. The absence of adequate restroom facilities can deter individuals from attending events or partaking in recreational activities in parks and other public spaces. Recognizing this necessity, the CRA Downtown District collaborated with the Downtown Improvement Board (DIB) to construct downtown's first public restroom facilities.

Both the DIB and CRA boards approved a budget of \$100,000 each towards the construction of these much-needed public restrooms. Working closely with the City's public works and engineering departments, the CRA and DIB embarked on determining the optimal placement for these facilities.

McKenzie Park, situated just one block off Harrison Avenue emerged as a prime candidate. With its rich history dating back to 1887, McKenzie Park serves as a focal point of community activity. With the CRA set to revitalize the park in 2024, the need for public restrooms was obvious. The west corner of the park was identified as the ideal location for construction, and design and engineering plans were promptly initiated.

The construction of public restrooms at McKenzie Park will significantly enhance the park's usability, attracting more visitors and bolstering local businesses. This initiative will foster a more inclusive and accessible environment, promoting social interaction, healthy activities, and economic vitality within the community. The projected completion date for this endeavor is the third quarter of 2024.

2023 Project Cost: \$0  
Anticipated Cost: \$200,000



# DOWNTOWN NORTH

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## A.D. Harris Learning Village

The A.D. Harris Learning Village stands as a cornerstone of the Downtown North CRA district, with a rich history dating back to its origins as the site of the first black school constructed with Rosenwald funds in the 1930s. In 2009, the Bay County School District made the decision to close the school, subsequently offering it to the CRA for a nominal fee of \$1 in 2011. In the aftermath of Hurricane Michael in 2018, which left the community without a recreational center, the CRA took measures to retrofit the A.D. Harris gymnasium from a half to a full court and installed a new scoreboard to accommodate youth basketball leagues. However, recognizing the need for further enhancements, the CRA embarked on phase two of renovations in 2022, aiming to enlarge the gymnasium to accommodate bleachers and restroom facilities. Anticipated for completion by the end of 2023, these renovations will transform the space into a versatile community hub, fostering greater community engagement.

Recent assessments of the existing buildings have revealed issues with the fire alarm panel system, prompting the need for complete replacement due to obsolete parts. Acknowledging the financial challenges posed by operating costs outweighing revenue, the CRA plans to host a public workshop to share their vision for the facility and offer suggestions on how to transform it into a self-sustaining resource that benefits the community.

*Gym Renovation Expenses in 2023 \$65,685*

## FDOT Landscape Grant

Both the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Downtown North CRA prioritize the beautification of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard (MLK), a vital thoroughfare owned by FDOT, which traverses the heart of the Glenwood community. In 2019, the Downtown North CRA secured a grant from FDOT to landscape and maintain MLK from Highway 231 to Highway 98, also incorporating retention ponds on 8th Street. However, the implementation of this project was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, finally reaching completion in 2021. This year, FDOT approached the CRA to extend the project parameters to encompass Highway 98 from Lincoln Drive to MLK. In support of this expansion, FDOT allocated an additional \$50,000 to the CRA, with a target completion date set for December 31, 2023.

*FDOT Grant Funds: \$250,000*

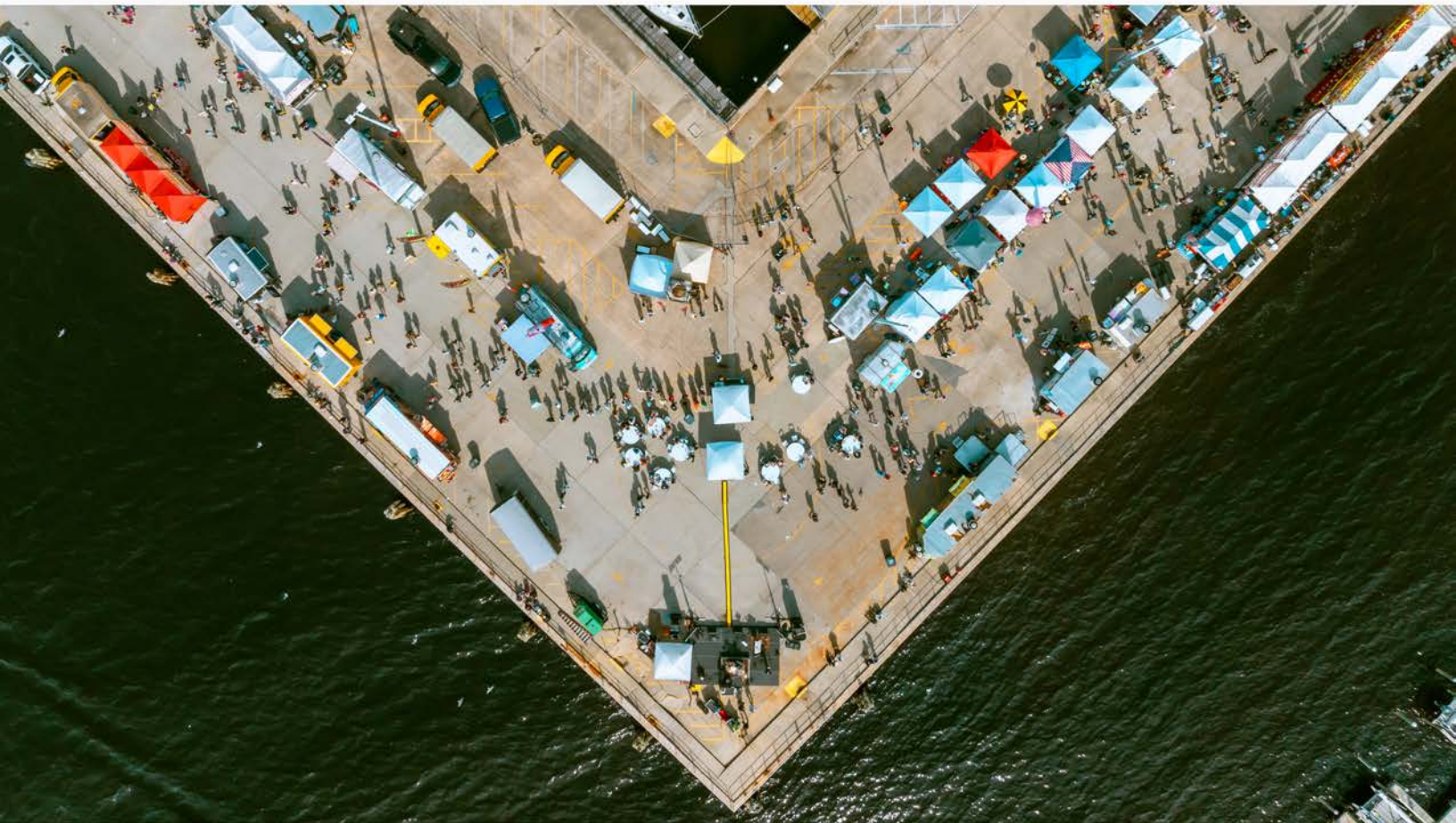
*CRA Funds: \$0*



## MOU with Historic St. Andrews Waterfront Partnership

The collaboration between the St. Andrews CRA and the Historic St. Andrews Waterfront Partnership (HSAWP) remains steadfast, with the latter serving as an advisory board to the CRA and contributing both staff and volunteers to manage the St. Andrews Publishing Museum, owned by the CRA. Notable among the activities organized by the HSAWP are museum exhibits and guided walking tours offered year-round, attracting tourists from diverse locations. Additionally, the HSAWP oversees the well-received St. Andrews Farmers Market held every Saturday at Oaks by the Bay Park.

*Project Cost: \$35,000*





## USDA Farmers Market Grant

Building on the success of the St. Andrews Farmers Market, the Historic St. Andrews Waterfront Partnership (HSAWP) applied for a grant from the USDA to further enhance their thriving market and establish a new market in the Glenwood area of the Downtown North district. The USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP), a three-year grant, aims to implement the "farm to town" initiative, develop a comprehensive marketing strategy, and establish a food distribution network for the new market in the Glenwood neighborhood, part of the Downtown North CRA. Recognizing the significance of this endeavor, the CRA board approved the allocation of matching funds from both the St. Andrews and Downtown North CRA districts. Currently, the HSAWP is collaborating with various organizations and community leaders in Glenwood to assess needs, identify available resources, and strategize for the new market. Given Glenwood's designation as a food desert, this opportunity holds immense importance in addressing food accessibility challenges. Notices of award for the grant are expected to be distributed in November 2023.

*Project Cost 2023: \$0*

*Grant Match: \$55,132 (3 years)*

## Parking Lot Improvements

In a collaborative effort aimed at optimizing parking facilities and enhancing safety measures, the CRA joined forces with the City to undertake the paving of three parking lots within the St. Andrews district. These lots, situated at Oaks by the Bay Park, 10th Street, and Bayview Avenue, were previously characterized by uneven gravel and inadequately marked parking spaces. The City developed plans and initiated a competitive bidding process, ultimately awarding the project to Mainline Construction. With an anticipated completion date set for January 2024, this endeavor seeks to transform these parking areas into well-maintained and efficiently organized spaces for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

*Project Cost: \$927,051*

*CRA Contribution: \$423,876 (2024)*





# ST. ANDREWS

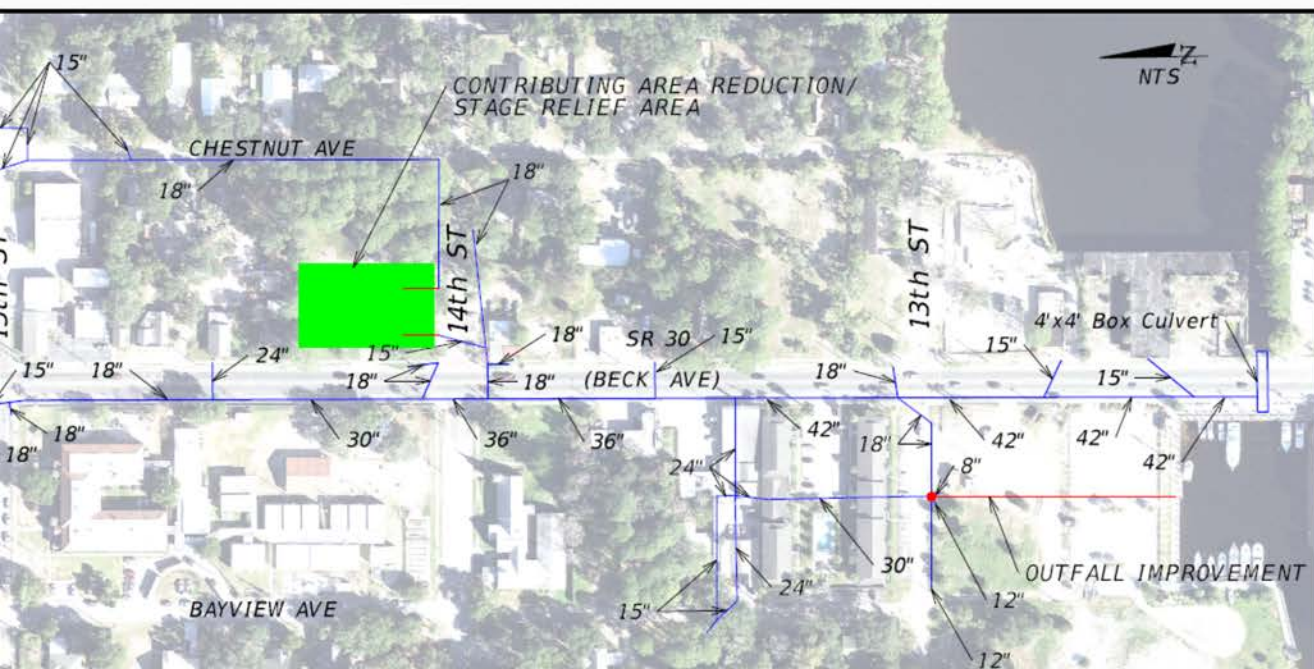
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### 1400 Beck Ave. Purchase

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) identified the vacant parcel at 1400 Beck Avenue as crucial to the regional stormwater drainage system in St. Andrews. To mitigate runoff issues impacting the intersection of SR 30 (Beck Avenue) and 14th Street, FDOT plans to construct a new stormwater facility on this parcel. As part of the agreement, FDOT will cover the costs associated with the stormwater pond design and construction, if the City acquires the property. Leveraging the strategic initiatives outlined in the St. Andrews CRA plan, the CRA facilitated the acquisition of the land for stormwater development. By addressing stormwater runoff at this intersection, this initiative is poised to bolster the economic prosperity of multiple businesses and mitigate the risk of repeat residential flooding in the vicinity.

*Project Cost: \$335,000*









## Millville Waterfront Park



The Millville Waterfront Park project fulfills a longstanding aspiration of the City of Panama City and the Millville community. Plans for the park, outlined in the Millville CRA Plan for over a decade, are set to transform vacant land into a vibrant community gathering space. The project will unfold over three years in phased stages with the planning commencing in 2023. Phase I includes the installation of essential amenities such as a walking path, benches, swings, lighting, landscaping, a playground, and dog cleanup stations. Future phases envision the addition of an amphitheater and public open-air classroom. Completion of Phase I will provide the community with a foundational park space, enhancing recreation opportunities and overall quality of life, as well as increasing adjacent property values.

*Project Budget: \$615,000*



## Daffin Park



The Millville CRA, in collaboration with the Panama City Quality of Life department, is initiating a transformative project aimed at revitalizing the cherished Daffin Park within the community. Some project goals are to enhance athletic facilities, elevating youth sports leagues, and fostering community health and engagement. The scope includes renovating and enlarging the football field, renovating the baseball field with a new fence, backdrop, and netting, installing irrigation systems and a new well, upgrading lighting, creating additional parking spaces, removing dead trees, upgrading the playground, installing garage doors and ribbon curbs, and replacing roofs and applying hardy board to the clubhouse and other buildings. With a budget of \$300,000, sourced with \$200,000 from Quality of Life (QOL) and \$100,000 from the CRA, the new and improved park should be complete and ready for enjoyment by the end of 2024.

*CRA Project Budget: \$100,000*



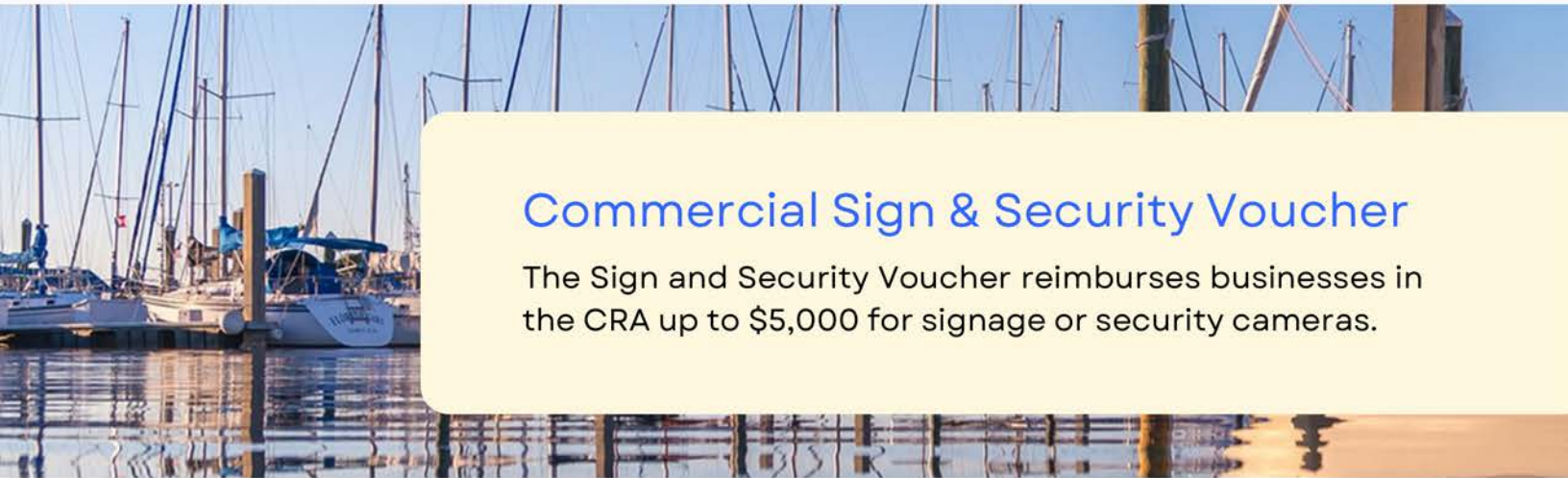
# GRANT PROGRAMS

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## Commercial Improvement Grant

This grant program offers a matching reimbursement of half the cost of a project up to \$50,000.



## Commercial Sign & Security Voucher

The Sign and Security Voucher reimburses businesses in the CRA up to \$5,000 for signage or security cameras.



## Residential Improvement Grant

The Residential Improvement Grant offers a matching grant of up to \$50,000 to homeowners wishing to make improvements to their homes.



# CRA STAFF

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