

2024 CRA ANNUAL REPORT



Prepared By: Community Development Department

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Other Reporting Requirements

No Funds were expended for affordable housing for low-income or moderate income residents.

Introduction

“A city proud of its past...

...and ready for the future.”

The 2024 Inverness Community Redevelopment Agency (ICRA) Report is one of five annual reports required by section 163.371, Florida Statutes. The redevelopment agency is required to prepare an annual report of its activities for the preceding fiscal year. The report must include a complete financial statement setting forth the assets, liabilities, income and operating expenses by March 31st.

The 2024 ICRA report is presented to the ICRA for approval on March 6th and the City Commission on March 18th. The approved report is directed to Citrus County, to the Florida Division of Economic Opportunity Department of Commerce, and posted to the City of Inverness website.

Background

Florida law (Chapter 163, Part III), provides the statutory authority for local governments to designate Community Redevelopment Areas to address redevelopment needs. This may include substandard or inadequate structures and infrastructure, insufficient roadways, inadequate parking and lack of affordable housing among other needs.

It is also used to leverage public funds to promote private sector activity in the targeted area. Establishment of the Downtown Entertainment District, Corridor Studies and Shoreline improvements are examples of projects that also promote private investment in the area.

To form a CRA the local government must survey the proposed redevelopment area to document existing conditions and prepare a Finding of Necessity. If the Finding of Necessity determines that the required conditions exist, the local government may create a Community Redevelopment Area to provide the tools needed to foster and support redevelopment of the targeted area.

Formation of a CRA starts with a public meeting and requires the following actions:

- I. Adopt the Finding of Necessity. This will formally identify the blight conditions within the targeted area and establish the area boundary.

- II. Develop and adopt the Community Redevelopment Plan. The plan addresses the unique needs of the targeted area and includes the overall goals for redevelopment in the area, as well as identifying specific projects.
- III. Create a Redevelopment Trust Fund. Establishment of the Trust Fund enables the Community Redevelopment Agency to direct the real property tax revenues back into the identified area.

ICRA Established 1990

Following a finding of necessity and the creation of a community redevelopment plan, the Inverness City Council, through Resolution 90-06, created the City's first CRA on October 16, 1990. On the same day, the City Council also created the Inverness Community Redevelopment Agency (ICRA) consisting of seven board members to serve as the governing body of the Agency. The governing body is appointed by the City Council with the responsibility to implement the Community Redevelopment Plan.

CRA [SEE-R-A], noun: A dependent special district in which any future increases in property values are set aside to support economic development projects within that district. There are currently over 220 Community Redevelopment Areas in the State of Florida (Florida Redevelopment Association).

The Council also created the CRA Trust Fund to finance the redevelopment plan. Inverness uses tax increment financing which is a unique tool available to cities and counties for redevelopment activities. It is used to leverage public funds to promote private sector activity in the targeted area. The dollar value of all real property in the Community Redevelopment Area is determined as of a fixed date, also known as the "frozen value." Taxing authorities, which contribute to the tax increment, continue to receive property tax revenues based on the frozen value. These frozen value revenues are available for general government purposes. However, any tax revenues from increases in real property value, referred to as the "increment," are deposited into the Community Redevelopment Agency Trust Fund and dedicated to the redevelopment

The Inverness Community Redevelopment Agency (ICRA) is administered by a seven-member CRA "Board" created by the City as authorized by the Inverness Code of Ordinances Chapter 2, Article 5. The Board is comprised of individuals appointed by the City Council. This seven-member board meets the first

Thursday of each month at 5:00 P.M., in the City Council Chamber 212 West Main Street, Inverness, FL 34450. Members include:

- Thomas Slaymaker, Chairman
- Charles Davis, Vice-Chairman
- Cindy Devires, member
- Anissa Crowder Slaymaker, member
- Janet Bega, Member
- Deborah Wheatley, Member
- Vacant, Member

The funds used to finance ICRA activities are generated from the 1,204 acre district via tax increment financing. The ICRA must maintain separate trust fund and expend those funds only in that district.

The ICRA is responsible for developing and implementing the Community Redevelopment Plan that addresses the unique needs of the area. The plan identifies the goals for area and the projects needed to achieve those goals. These projects are identified in the Annual Report which is updated on an annual basis to address changing conditions in the CRA.

What is Tax Increment Financing?

Tax increment financing is a specific tool available to local government in Florida for redevelopment activities. The dollar value of all real property in the Community Redevelopment Area is determined as of a fixed date, also known as the “frozen value.” Taxing authorities, which contribute to the tax increment, continue to receive property tax revenues based on the frozen value. These frozen value revenues are available for general government purposes. However, any tax revenues from increases in real property value, referred to as “increment,” are deposited into the Community Redevelopment Agency Trust Fund and dedicated to the redevelopment area.

CALCULATING THE TAX INCREMENT

The general formula used to calculate increment revenues is:

$$I = \frac{r(0.95n - i)}{1,000}$$

where:

- I** = the increment revenues
- r** = the tax rate (millage) in the current year
- 0.95n** = 95% of the assessed valuation for the current year
- i** = the assessed valuation in the base year

There are two fundamental ways TIF can be used. One is where TIF revenues are used on a “pay as you go” basis (where the annual stream of revenue is used to fund small projects), and another is “pay as you use” financing (where TIF revenues are used to pay debt service costs over the life of a project lasting 10 or more years).

It is important to note that property tax revenue collected by the School Board and any special district are not affected under the tax increment financing

process. Further, unlike in some states, Florida taxing entities write a check to the CRA trust fund, after monies are received from the tax collector. In California, the increment is sent to the CRAs directly out of collected county tax revenues, before they are distributed to each taxing entity.

The tax increment revenues can be used immediately, saved for a particular project, or can be bonded to maximize the funds available. Any funds received from a tax increment financing area must be used for specific redevelopment purposes within the targeted area, and not for general government purposes.

CRA Regulatory Framework

The City of Inverness Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) operates under the authority of Florida state laws and City of Inverness Ordinances and Resolutions. This regulatory framework is designed to ensure accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in serving the public. Below are key statutes, resolutions and ordinances governing our CRA's activities, responsibilities, and operational guidelines.

Statutory Authority

Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes - Community Redevelopment Act of 1969

F.S. 163.330 - 163.370: This chapter provides the foundation for Community Redevelopment Agencies in Florida, empowering them to address issues in slum and blighted areas. It outlines the CRA's purpose, powers, and requirements for establishing redevelopment areas and plans.

Chapter 189, Florida Statutes - Uniform Special District Accountability Act

F.S. 189.069: This statute mandates specific transparency requirements for all special district websites, including requirements for budgets, audits, and public meetings.

F.S. 189.015 - 189.016: These sections outline the requirements for public meeting notices, as well as guidelines for budget postings and amendments.

Chapter 189, Florida Statutes - Special district Online Registration Requirements

The City of Inverness CRA is registered with the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) as a Special District, with an up-to-date profile of its purpose, boundary, and operational status.

Chapter 189, Section 069 - Special District Public Facilities Report

F.S. 189.069 This statute mandates that special districts are required to include a link to a code of ethics on their official websites.

Chapter 286, Florida Statutes - Sunshine Law (Public Records and Open Meetings)

F.S. 286.011: Known as the "Sunshine Law," this statute ensures that CRA meetings and records are accessible to the public, promoting transparency and open government.

Local Resolutions and Ordinances

The City of Inverness CRA is governed by resolutions and ordinances passed by the Inverness City Council, which established the CRA's purpose and defined its redevelopment areas. CRA was Established by Resolution 90-06 on October 16, 1990 which included 46 acres and creation of the 7 member Inverness Community Redevelopment Agency (ICRA) to serve as the governing body.

CRA Update Plan and Expansion by: Resolution 2014-18 at which expanded the service area to a total of 1,203 total acres

Expanded By: Ordinance 2014-703 on June 17, 2014

Adoption of Expanded Area by Ordinance 2015-710 on June 11, 2015

City of Inverness Code of Ordinances Chapter 2 Article V.

Section 2.201. - Name

Section 2-202.- Powers

Section 2-203.- Redevelopment Trust Fund to finance the redevelopment plan

Annual Reporting Requirements

Community Redevelopment Agencies in Florida are required by state law to prepare five annual reports:

1. Annual Audit
2. Annual Fees and Updates to the Office of Special District Accountability at the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
3. Comprehensive Annual Financial Report
4. Annual March 31 Report to the public (posted online)
5. Annual Budget (proposed and adopted) and Board, contact information updated and posted each September online on CRA website

Requirements established by House Bill 7013 as detailed below:

House Bill 7013 Requirements for Special Districts

The Florida Legislature passed House Bill 7013 during the 2024 Legislative Session. This bill established performance measures and standards required for each special district. Beginning October 1, 2024, or by the end of the first full fiscal year after its creation, whichever is later, each special district must:

Establish goals and objectives for each program and activity undertaken by the special district.

Establish performance measures and standards to determine if the special district's goals and objectives are being achieved.

Annual Report and Website Requirement By December 1, 2025, and by each December 1 thereafter, each special district must publish an annual report on the special district's official website describing the following:

The performance measures and standards used by the special district to make this determination; The goals and objectives achieved by the special district; The goals or objectives the special district failed to achieve, if any.

History of the Inverness CRA

Under Florida law (Chapter 163, Part III) local governments are able to designate areas as Community Redevelopment Areas as (CRAs) when certain conditions exist. Examples of conditions that can support the creation of a Community Redevelopment Area include, but are not limited to: the presence of substandard or inadequate structures, a shortage of affordable housing, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient roadways, and inadequate parking. To document that the required conditions exist, the local government must survey the proposed redevelopment area and prepare a Finding of Necessity. If the Finding of Necessity determines that the required conditions exist, the local government may create a Community Redevelopment Area to provide the tools needed to foster and support redevelopment of the targeted area. The provided data for the original CRA included the land use acre for the 45.76 acre district.

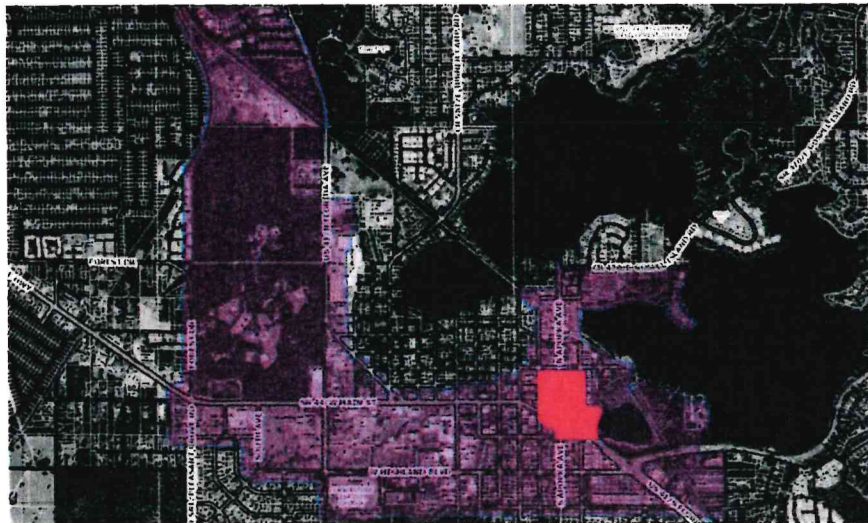
CRA Expansion 2014

In 2014, a study was performed to review the immediate and long-term opportunities to continue the successful ICRA work that started in 1990. This review, termed as a Finding of Necessity (FON), identified the need for additional work and resources to continue efforts toward removal of the blighted conditions within the area. Using the FON as the baseline document, the concept of expansion was supported by the Planning and Zoning commission and the ICRA. The result was an updated Community Redevelopment Plan prepared under UCRA oversight with support from the Inverness City Council.

The expanded community redevelopment district significantly increased the land area to approximately 1,203 acres, including the original 46 acres. This added 528 parcels with a 2015 taxable value of \$262,225,961.

Major defined areas for improvement included the White Lake Industrial area, the proposed Medical Arts District around the hospital, additional downtown core revitalization, improved eco-tourism and recreational activities and an overall urban design guideline improvement for future development.

Post-Expansion 2014



Assessed Base Value & Current Year

Original CRA - 1990	
Current year taxable value in the tax increment area	20,280,404
Base year taxable value in the tax increment area	4,989,361
Current year tax increment value (Line 1 - Line 2)	15,291,043
Prior Year Final Taxable value in the tax increment area	18,942,582
Prior year tax increment value (Line 4 - Line 2)	13,953,221
Expanded CRA - 2014	
Current year taxable value in the tax increment area	194,145,674
Base year taxable value in the tax increment area	105,458,084
Current year tax increment value (Line 1 - Line 2)	88,687,590
Prior Year Final Taxable value in the tax increment area	184,035,263
Prior year tax increment value (Line 4 - Line 2)	78,577,179

The expanded CRA was formally approved during mid-2015. Concurrently, the City also decided to leverage its expanded CRA future revenues with a bond issue (see below) to provide immediate construction funds for a series of downtown improvements.

Bond Issue

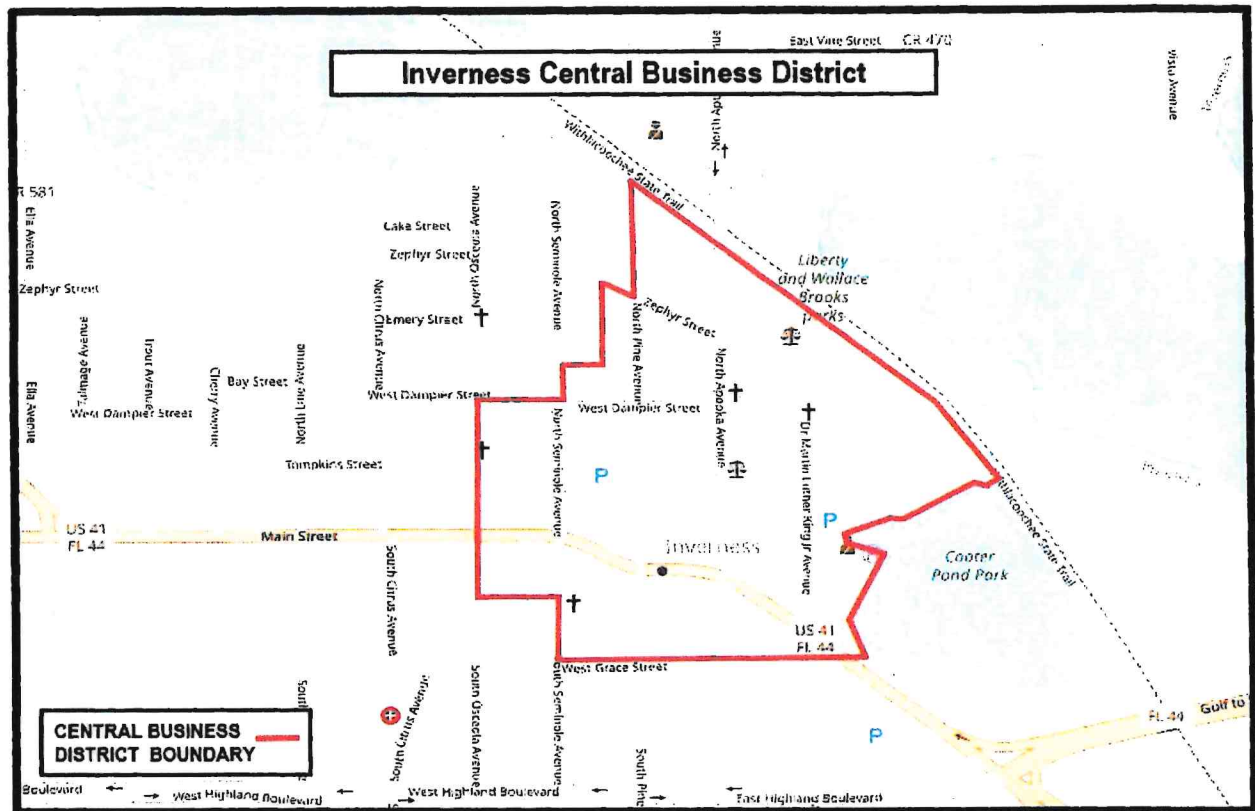
The expanded 1,203 acre CRA area was projected to generate just under a million dollars per year in revenue to the Agency. In 2016, the City leveraged its future CRA revenues with a \$12.9 million dollar bond issue. Combined with an additional \$2.5 million dollars in cash, the City created a \$14.4 million dollar construction account to fund seven major projects and Project Management/Consultant fees.

Source of Funds	
Par Amount of 2017 Bonds	12,980,000
Net Original Issue Premium	398,604
Unspent Proceeds from Prior Note	2,005,005
City Contribution	2,500,000
Agency Contribution	600,000
Total Funding by Source	18,483,609
Use of Funds	
Payment of Prior Note 2017	3,024,593
Construction Account	14,438,672
Restricted Surplus Account	600,000
Cost of Issuance	420,344
Total Funding by Use	18,483,609

Completed Bond Issue Projects - Total \$13,744,542

Wallace Brooks Park, Located on Lake Henderson, features a boat-friendly dock for motorized and non-motor vessels, as well as a pavilion	2,228,999
Historic Train Station building, permanently relocated closer to the Withlacoochee State Trail, can accommodate a restaurant or retail businesses needing space	1,298,415
The Inverness Visitor's Center	672,304
Liberty Park, located on Lake Henderson, features a large grass event area, public restrooms and the City's 9/11 Memorial	2,546,934
The Depot District features a large covered, open-air building, iconic water tower, stage, outdoor seating, bike parking and trail access	5,758,876
The Military Memorial located just outside of City Hall, features a piece of the fall Saddam Hussein statue from Iraq Brough back by U.S. military personnel	375,637
The City Garden, which opened in 2018, features 22 organic growing beds and a composting site	289,655
Part-time Project Management Staff/Consultant	532,722
Total	13,703,542

Location of Completed Bond Issue Projects



2024 Statement of Revenues, Expenditures & Changes in Fund Balance

Revenues

CDBG Economic Development	
County Tax Increment Financing	766,530.48
FL Safe Interest	72,428.77
City Tax Increment Financing	766,530.48
Total Revenues	1,605,489.73

Expenditures

Downtown Development Expenses	490,589.28
Bond Principal	335,000.00
Bond Interest	410,800.00
Total Downtown Redevelopment Expenses	1,236,389.28
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenue over Expenditures	369,100.45
TRF to Gen - Finance and Admin	286,500
Net Change in Fund Balance	82,600.45
Fund Balance, 10/01/22	2,048,742.65
Fund Balance, 10/01/23	2,131,343.10

Balance Sheet

Assets

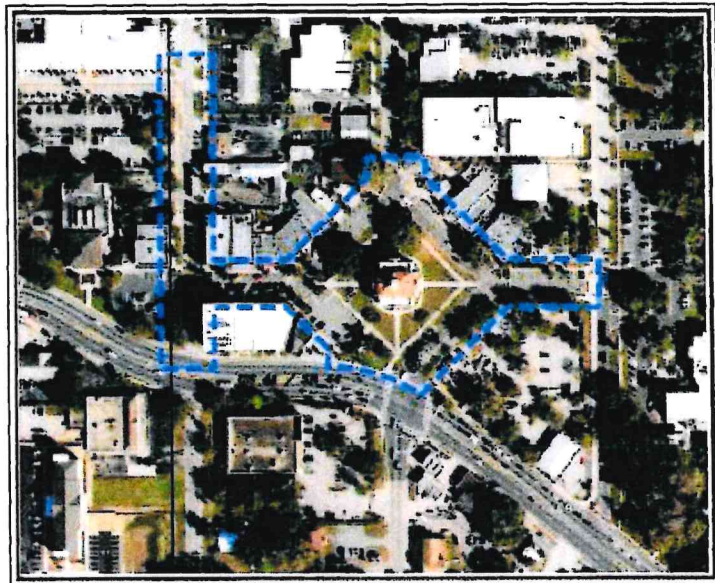
Cash and Investments	2,669,254.66
Total Assets	2,669,254.66
Accounts Payable	34,439.30
Contracts/Retainage Payments	14.68
Total Liabilities	34,453.98
Fund Balance	2,131,343.10
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance	2,165,797.08

2024 ICRA Project Descriptions

Downtown Landscaping Initiative

The downtown landscape was last updated in 2006. Staff have been working with Citrus County to develop a new landscaping approach for the Historic Citrus County Courthouse and the adjacent downtown areas. The scope of work will evaluate the existing landscape improvements within the Courthouse property and adjacent streetscapes and develop an updated streetscaping design. The goal is to update the appearance of both areas with an improved, blended and coordinated landscape theme.

The City engaged Community Land Design Inc. in August 2024 to develop the theme and plans for the updated streetscape effort. The work was advertised for bids in January of 2025 with bid submittals due in February and to the Council for consideration in March. If a bid is approved the work will begin in April and be finished in June of 2025.

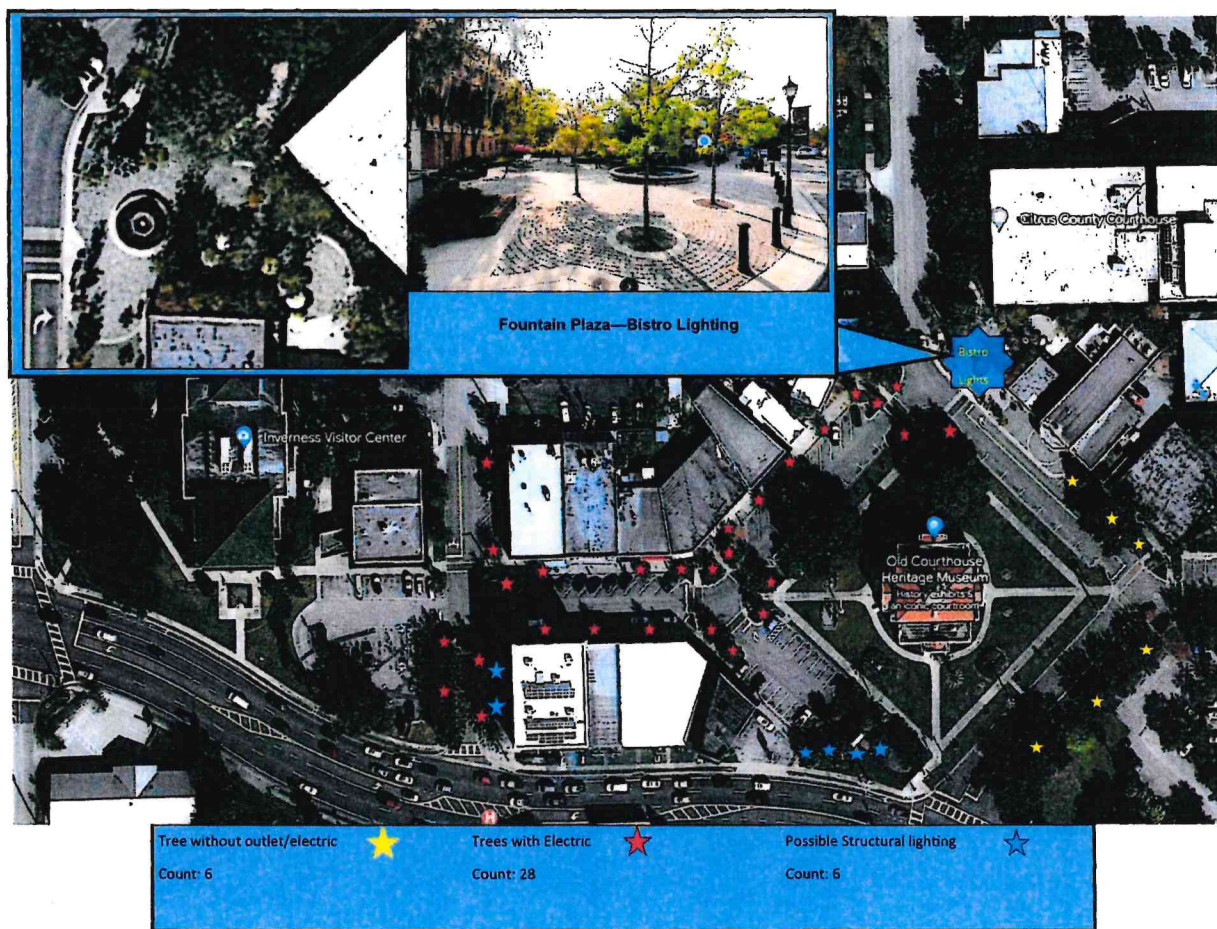


LOCATION MAP

Downtown Lighting Program

This project was designed to add festive lighting to the downtown area by the installation of Wi-Fi controlled changeable color PAR 38 LED bulbs to provide uplighting on the trees and landscaping in the downtown. These bulbs have the capability to change color and beam to reflect the theme of the event. Red and green for Christmas, Green for St. Patrick's Day, red for Valentine's Day and other color combinations as desired.

Work included in installation of 48 new in-ground fixtures, 68 bulbs, and 10 Wi-Fi antennas. Control of color and beam is done by the Cree Lighting Wi-Fi application. The project was completed in November of 2025 to coincide with the annual lighting of the City Christmas Tree.





Gateway & Wayfinding Signage

GAI Community Services Group was engaged to develop and design a new street signage system to enhance the City's brand. The new street signage system included a Phase I Gateway signage to enhance the welcome experience into the City. This includes two (2) large monument signs; four (4) portrait monuments and five (5) directional signs. This work was bid with a contract price of \$285,750 and projected completion in June of 2025. A Change Order was made to include a digital message board and directional signage to the Whispering Pines Park on the entry monument sign at Forest Drive at State Road 44 and Forest Drive.

The Phase II Way-finding effort includes 71 signs, and the cost exceeded the project budget. These signs will be located in and adjacent to the downtown business district and points of interest. This second Way-finding phase of the new street signage system be included with the FY 26 project proposals and will complete the project implementation.

Michael Baker
INTERNATIONAL

Improve Livability

As part of the wayfinding program, gateway signage helps create a city's sense of place. Seven gateway locations have been identified, but the two on SR 44 are the most prominent.



Figure 10 Western Gateway

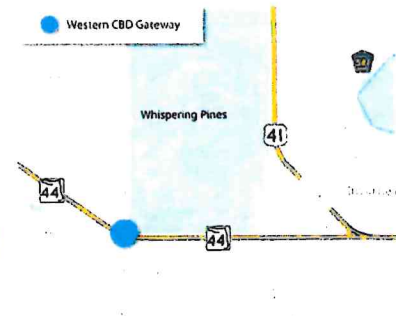


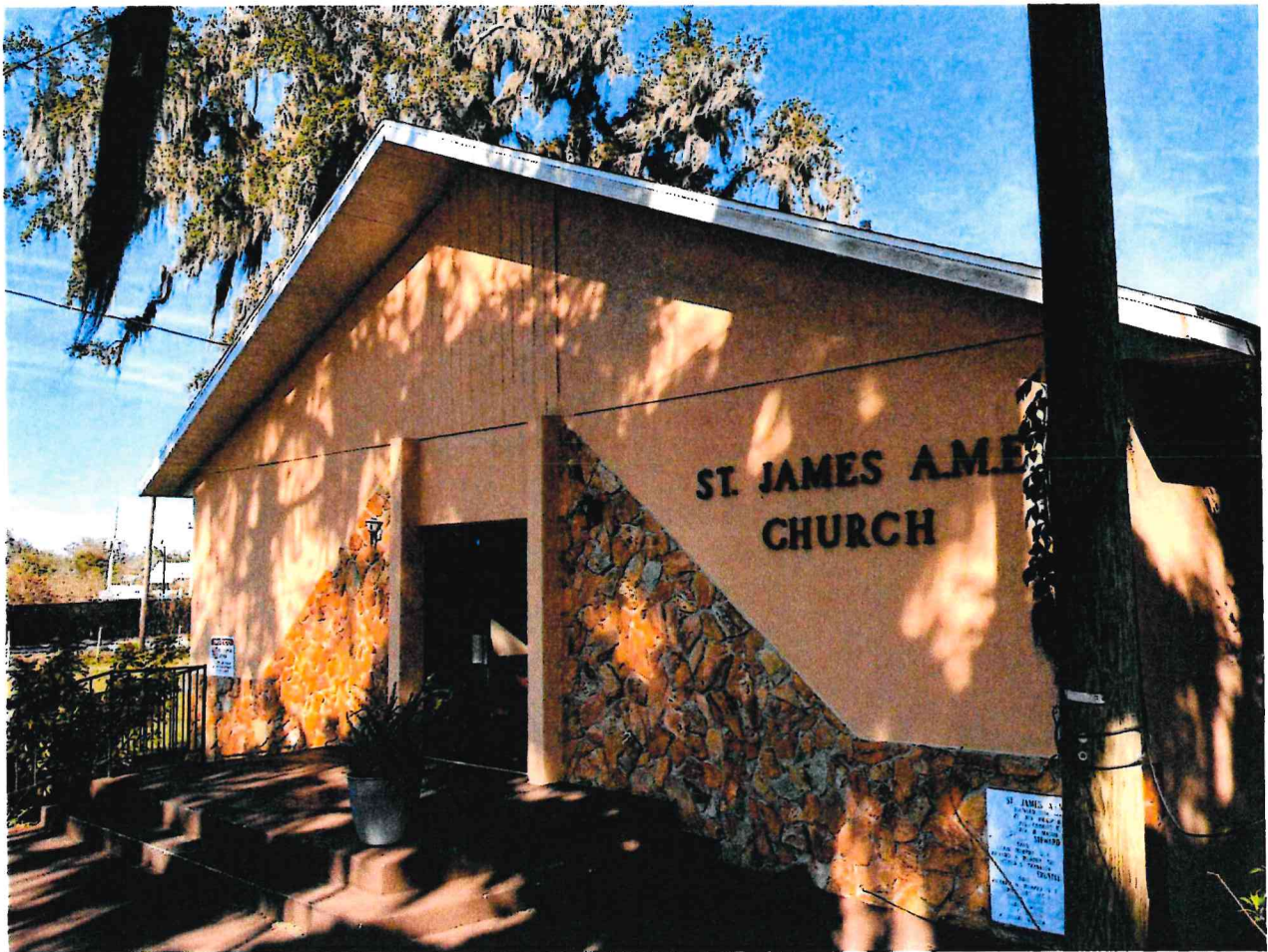
Figure 11 Western Gateway Location Map

The western gateway to the Central Business District is located at the northeast corner of SR-44 and Forest Drive at the southwest corner of Whispering Pines City Park. This gateway features a rest shelter for people who are walking from the park into the CBD or walking/biking from the Florida Trail further south.

Facade Grant Program

The Inverness Community Redevelopment Agency sponsors a Commercial Facade Program to benefit property owners in the Community Redevelopment Area. Matching grants up to \$7,500.00 are available to qualified owners. Eligible improvements which protect the structural integrity of the building and are visible from the public right-of-way include: 1. Lighting; 2. Landscape Improvements; 3. Awnings; 4. Signage; 5. Painting; and 6. Parking Lots.

Facade grants were awarded St. James AME Church at 204 North Apopka for a new roof for the historic structure in the amount of \$7,500 and the Bistro Restaurant at 104 West Main Street for a new Awning in the amount of \$737.50.

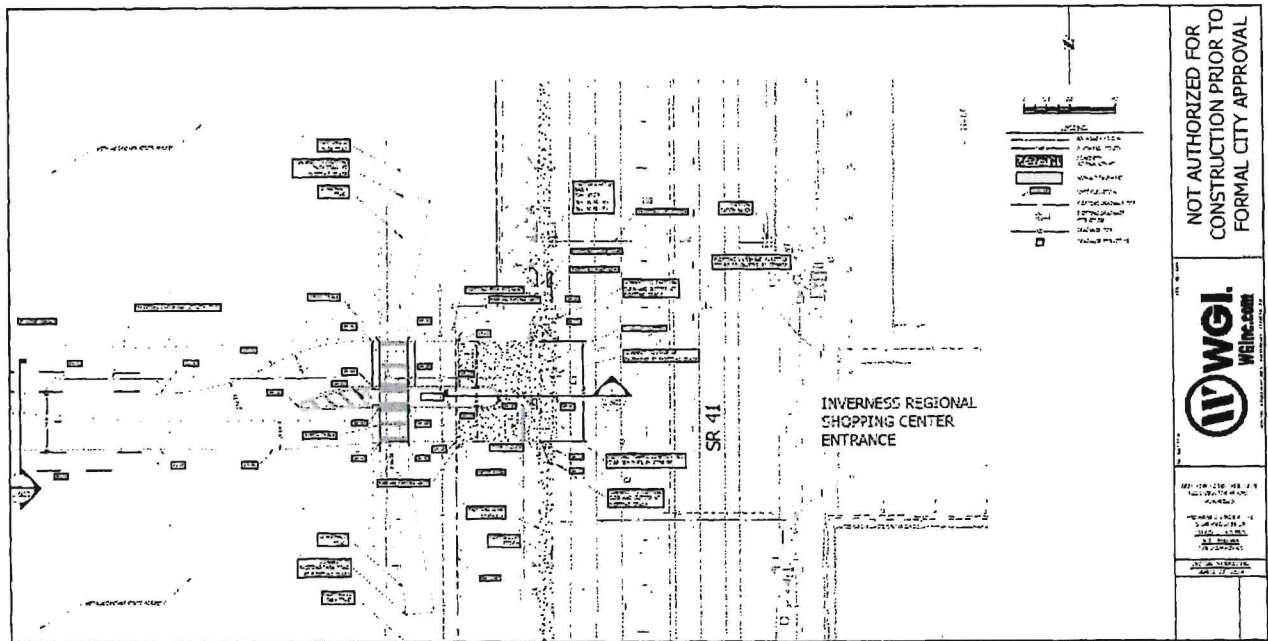




Whispering Pine Park New Entrance

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) began widening of U.S. Hwy 41 North in 2023. The City has been working with the FDOT in a collaborative effort to construct a new entryway and signage into Whispering Pines Park.

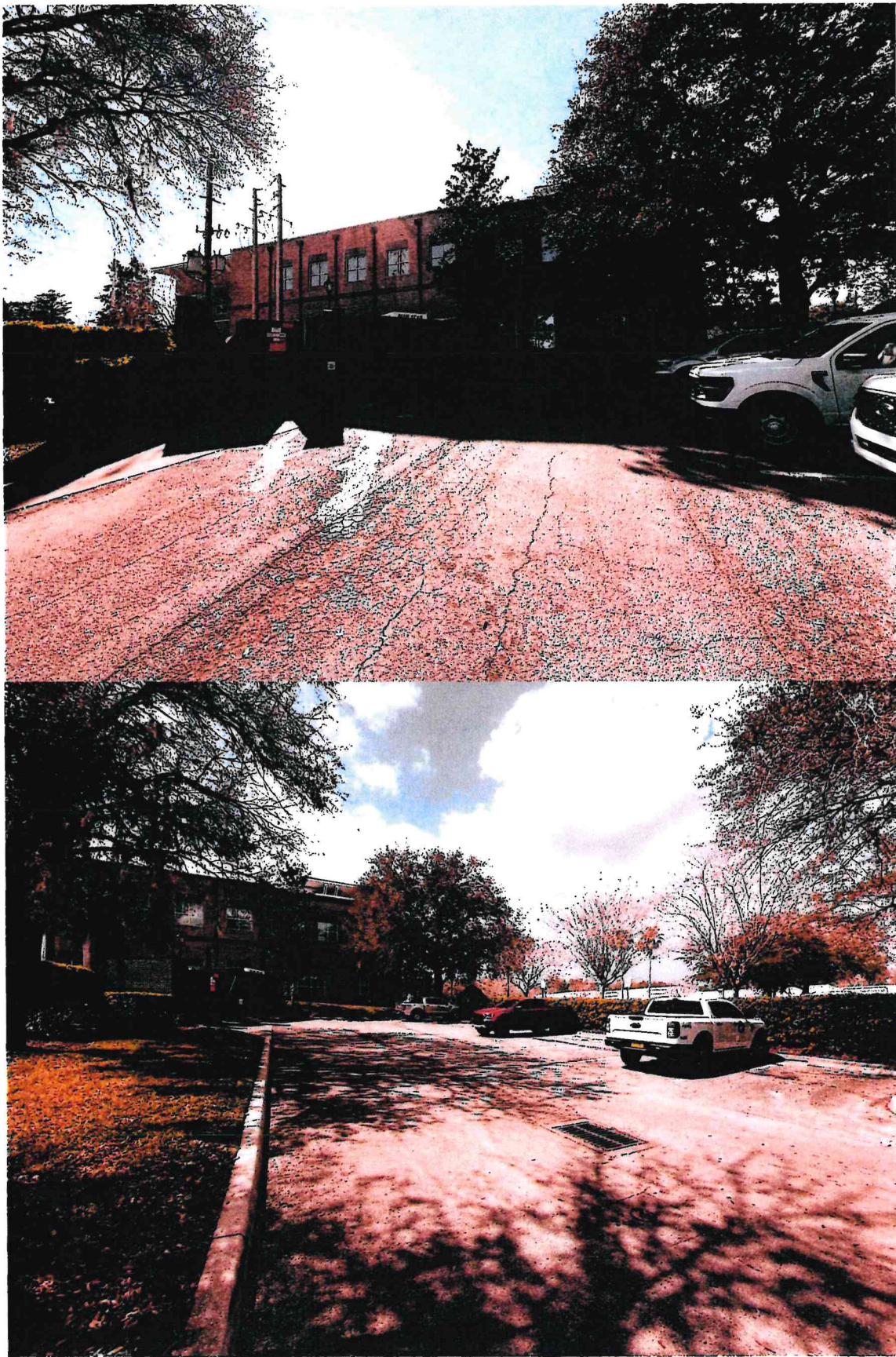
The FDOT will provide a \$1,000,000 legislative appropriation to build out a complete entrance to connection to an existing road within the park. A new sign will also be constructed at the entry. The City is required to have a minimum of \$200,000 in matching funds. The city match is providing funds for the engineering design and permitting of the entry and signage. The Wantman Group was issued a task order for professional services in the amount of \$381,667 for the engineering work the is currently underway.



IGC Parking Expansion

This project altered two existing solid waste compactor pad enclosures to install a new backup power generator and enlarged self-contained trash compactor unit. The smaller footprint of both units allowed the use of 14 additional parking spaces in the east side parking lot. The total project budget was \$202,000. The work was completed under budget with the addition of an automatic transfer switch for a seamless on/off during power outages.





Corridor Study

The City of Inverness engaged Michael Baker International to develop a comprehensive approach to planning improvements to State Route (SR) 44/U.S. Highway (US) 41 that will make it safer, improve livability, and expand the local economy.

The key components of the implementation plan include working with the FDOT and Medical Arts District. Coordination with the FDOT as the SR44/41 Main Street facility will ultimately require a new design and reconstruction to achieve the city's goal of safety and livability.

The most promising opportunity in Inverness is the development of the Medical Art District around HCA Hospital, given the unique arrangement with HCA's lease on the properties there the City will need to be engaged as a critical partner. The corridor plan calls for a working group, starting with the current study. This project had minimum carry forward funding in FY 24 and efforts were confined to coordination with FDOT on change in classification to reduce the speed limit on Hwy 44. Funding may be proposed in FY 26.



Introduction

Inverness is connected to the state of Florida by US- 41 and SR-44. The city is bound by lakes, wildlife management areas, and other communities.

The City of Inverness is positioned at the crossroads of two major highways which makes it well-connected, with larger cities such as Gainesville, Tampa, and Orlando only about an hour away. Thus, as the City considers changes to its main thoroughfares, the significance of these two highways on both county and state traffic cannot be understated. These roads are highly trafficked, with an estimated 35,000 to 40,000 total vehicles per day, including 6,600 heavy trucks.

Given the lakes to the east and the Citrus Wildlife Management area to the southwest, changes to either or both principal highways are not feasible. The City must therefore find a way to work with these roads at their current locations. This study presents possible solutions to improve pedestrian safety and walkability, especially for older adults, while preserving the city's existing charm and interconnectedness.

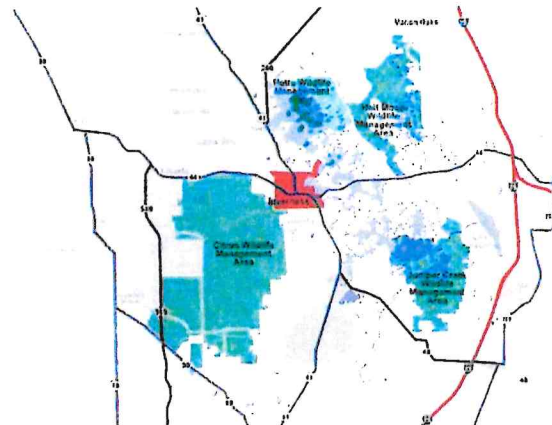
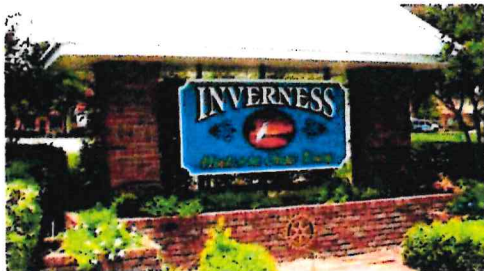


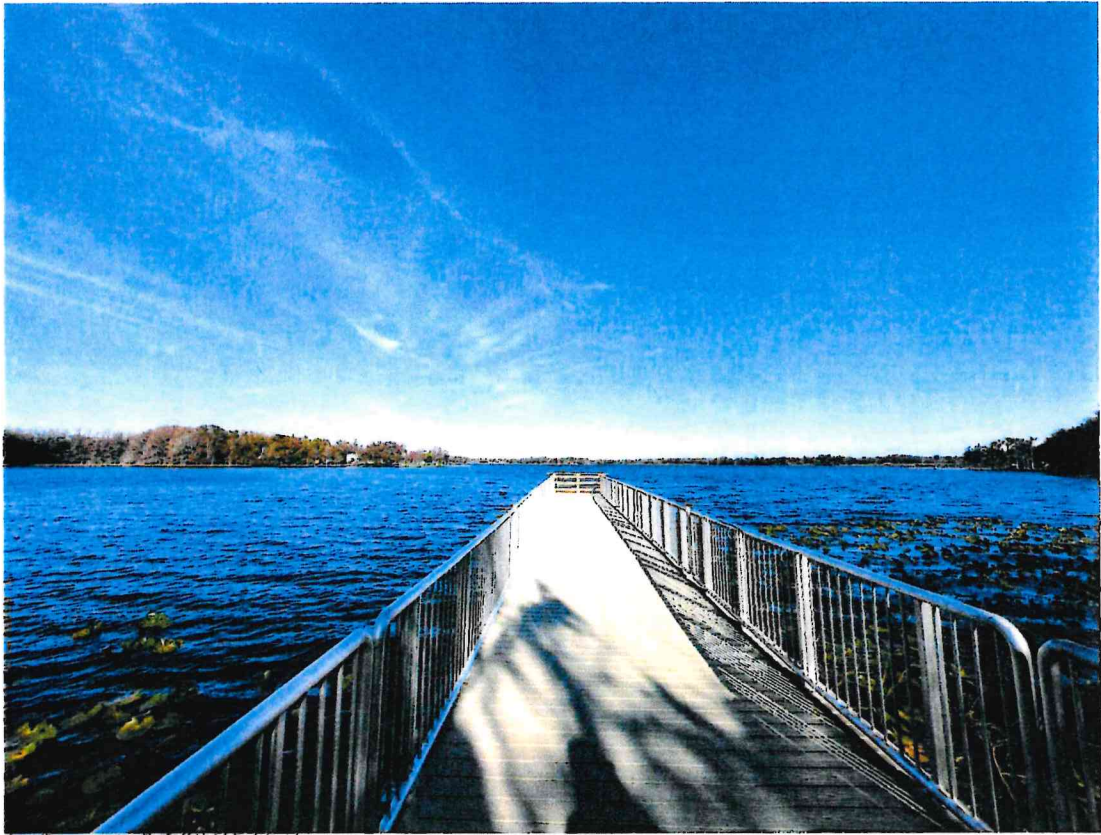
Figure 2 Regional Map

Shoreline Restoration

Work on the shoreline restoration project at Wallace Brooks Park started with hiring an environmental consultant to determine permitting requirements for the project and hiring a contractor to restore the shoreline by removing the vegetation and muck.

The boat docks will be moved from Wallace Brooks to Liberty Park to provide increased protection from the lakes. The removal of the docks at Wallace Brooks will provide a new swimming area. No Wake and Swimming Area signs and markings will be installed.





City Walk

Ongoing multi-year effort to plan, acquire easements and create a reverse frontage downtown corridor to increase pedestrian mobility and amenities, green space and outdoor dining.



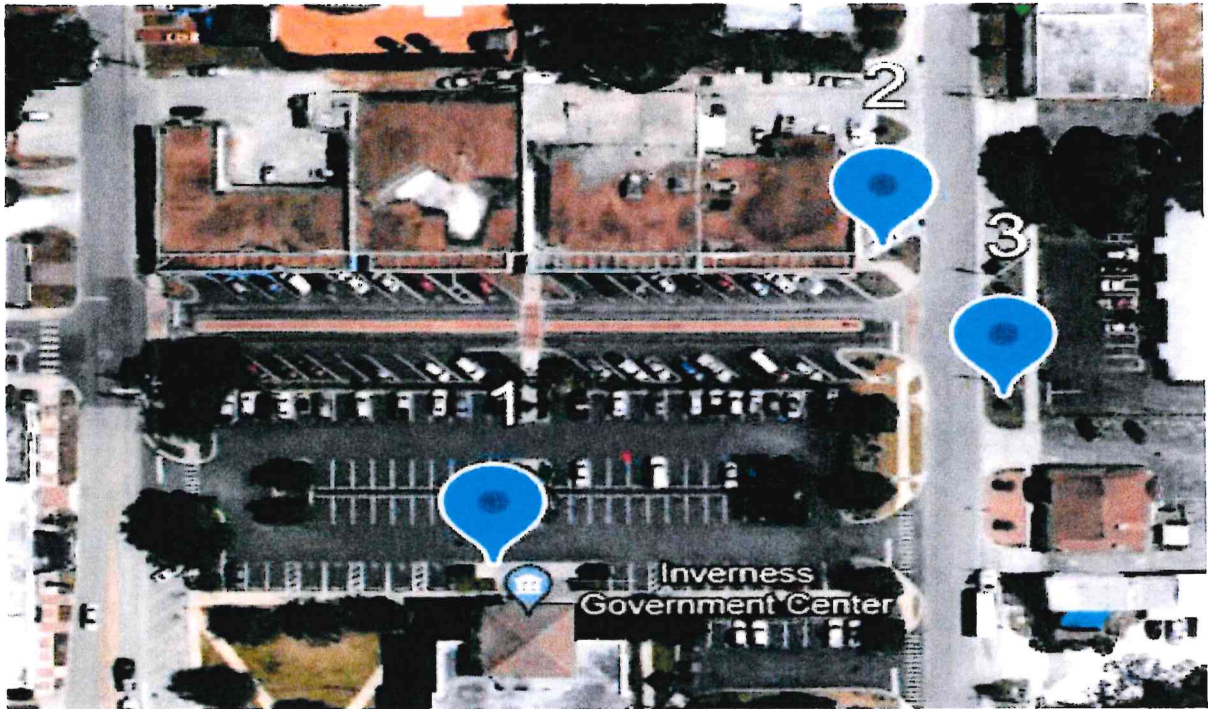
Painted Cooter Turtle Art Project

The Painted Inverness Turtle Project was introduced at the 2023 Festival of the Arts. The Inverness Arts and Cultural Alliance (IACA) engaged a local artist to paint focal points of the City onto a 6-foot cast recycled aluminum turtle and transform it into an attractive piece of art.

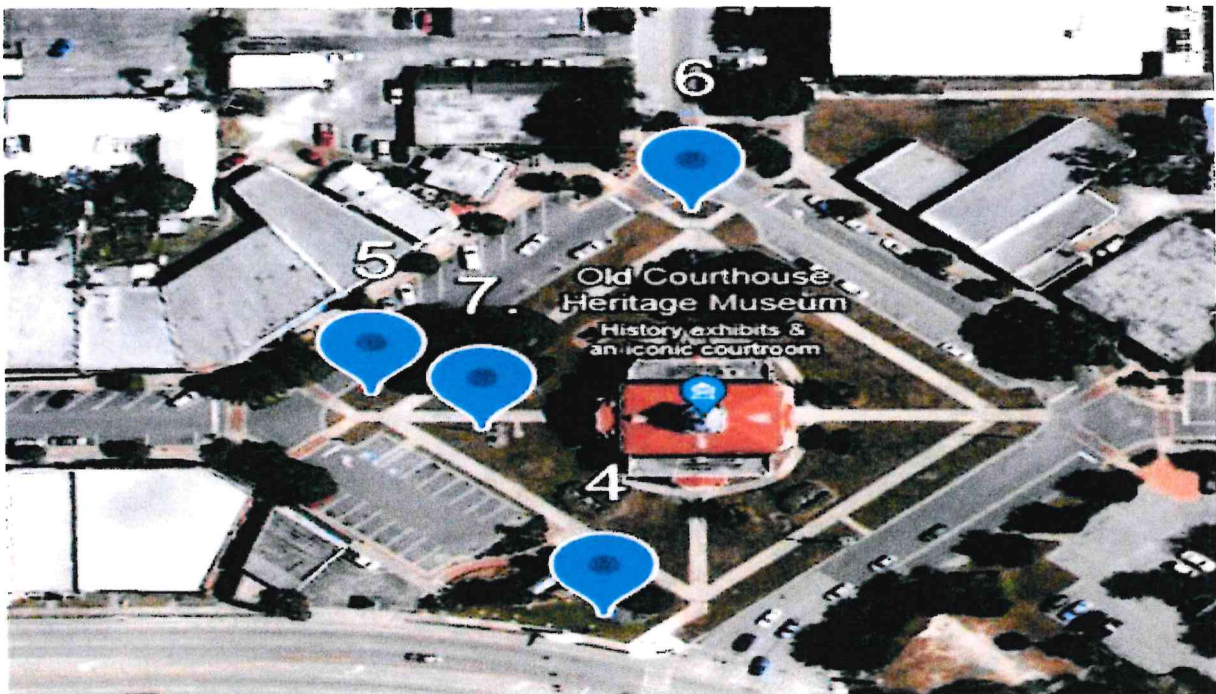
The project was expanded to include the fabrication and painting of nine turtles, including five large turtles and four small turtles. A group of professional artists were engaged to paint the turtles with a theme that reflects the city and the location of the artwork. The art work was installed throughout Entertainment District.



Sites 1 - 3 Proposed Installation Locations



Sites 4 - 7 Proposed Installation Locations



Enclosure Public Notice of Hearing to Approve the March 2024 Inverness Community Redevelopment Agency Report.

2/28/25, 10:51 AM

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**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
CITY OF INVERNESS
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by the Inverness City Council for the City of Inverness, will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, March 18, 2024, at 5:30 p.m., in City Council Chambers, 212 W. Main Street, Inverness, FL 34450 to adopt the City of Inverness Community Redevelopment Agency (ICRA) 2024 Annual Report.

In accordance with Section 163.356(3)(c), Florida Statutes, The City of Inverness Community Development Agency has developed the annual report of its activities for the preceding fiscal year, including a complete financial statement setting forth assets, liabilities, income and operating expenses as of the end of fiscal year 2024. This report has been filed with the City Clerk and is available for inspection during business hours in the office of the City Clerk and in the Inverness Community Development Department located at 212 W. Main Street, Inverness, Florida.

Any person requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in this meeting should contact the City Clerk, Susan Jackson, at 352-726-2611 at least three days in advance so arrangements can be made. For more information contact Chris Shoemaker, Community Development, 352-726-2611x1103.