



FUNDING AND GRANTS

Historically the City of Wauchula has utilized a “pay-as-you-go” approach to funding improvements through the community redevelopment area. This approach reflects a conservative financial perspective that has the advantage of avoiding long term costs of financing but also has a drawback by extending the time frames required to make needed and desired improvements within the community redevelopment area. An alternative approach would be to consider financing and the issuance of bonds by the community redevelopment agency based upon projected receipts from the tax increment revenues. Given the remaining authorized time for the Wauchula Community Redevelopment Area by statute, consideration of the bonding of the tax increment financing approach is recommended as a means of expediting some of the project and program elements identified in this master plan update.

In order to achieve additional value from the tax increment financing approach or through the “pay-as-you go” approach, several additional funding sources have been identified that may be pursued by the community redevelopment agency. Whether the long term bonding approach or the cash method for project payment is utilized, it is important to establish an on-going program and expectations to pursue matching funding from additional sources.

There are a variety of grant and funding opportunities available to leverage the tax increment funding received by the Wauchula Community Redevelopment Agency. Having an updated Community Redevelopment Plan with identified capital improvement projects and program enhancements in place will increase the likelihood of receiving additional funding for specific projects by providing an overall vision, community support, and technical implementation criteria that will help implement the overall goals of the community. The following presents a summary of various grant and funding opportunities available. This listing is not intended to be exhaustive; there may be additional funding opportunities that can further assist with design and development assistance for the identified redevelopment program and new sources and modified grant and funding program opportunities should be evaluated at the regional, state and national levels. It is recommended during the annual review process that further review and update of available and applicable funding opportunities be explored to determine applicability for specific project(s), as well as revisions to application procedures, guidelines and dollar amounts.

USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program - The USDA solicits applications for its Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBER) Programs to provide funding to improve the economic conditions of rural areas. In 2010, USDA expected to award approximately 200 grants averaging \$99,000 and totaling \$200 million to public bodies and private nonprofit corporations which are in rural areas. “Rural area” is defined as a city, town, or unincorporated area that has a population of

50,000 inhabitants or less, other than an urbanized area immediately adjacent to a city, town, or unincorporated area that has a population in excess of 50,000 inhabitants. For information concerning what RBER grants may be used for, contact the Florida USDA Rural Development Office. Applications for grant funding are open until funding is depleted or there is another announcement made.

For detailed requirements refer to: The USDA Rural Development grant information at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/RBEG%20Notice.doc>

Local Agency Program (LAP) - This process is a partnership between FDOT and other local agencies (such as government entities or transportation authorities) to plan, develop, design, acquire right-of-way, and construct transportation facilities. FDOT administers funds and contracts with local agencies for reimbursement of design and construction expenses. The FDOT reimburses these Local Agencies for services provided to the public. Authority for LAP is provided in Sections 20.23(3) (a), 334.044(7), 339.05, and 339.12 of the Florida Statutes.

Contact:
Florida Department of Transportation
Office of Production Support
605 Suwannee Street, MS 40
Tallahassee Fl, 32399-0450
Phone: (850) 414-4380
Link: <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/projectmanagementoffice/lap/pdfs/LAPQuickReferenceGuide.pdf>

FDEP Office of Greenways and Trails - The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) offered by the Florida Office of Greenways and Trails has a competitive grant program to assist with developing recreational trails, trailheads, and trailside facilities. Program moneys are intended to be for the development of motorized and non-motorized recreational trails. Funds from this program can be used for property acquisition, trails development, and construction and maintenance of trails.

Maximum Grant Amount: \$250,000 (non-motorized projects); \$250,000 (mixed-use projects); and \$592,000 (motorized projects)
Matching Ratio: (RTP Grant: Local Match) 80:20, 60:40, or 50:50

Contact:
Alexandra Weiss
Office of Greenways and Trails
Department of Environmental Protection

3900 Commonwealth Blvd., MS 795
Tallahassee, Fl 32399-3000

Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP) - This grant program, offered by Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), is a competitive grant program that provides financial assistance to local governments for developing or acquiring land for public outdoor recreational purposes. State funding levels have been significantly reduced or eliminated in recent legislative budgets as a result of competing economic priorities but monitoring of funding each year is recommended.

Maximum Grant: \$200,000

Match Requirements: Between zero and 50 percent match required based on total project cost.

The amount available is announced at the start of each submission cycle. The maximum award is typically \$200,000, which may be divided amongst three categories - acquisition, development and trails. Matching is required as follows:

- 0% match - \$50,000 or less
- 25% match - \$50,001 - \$150,000
- 50% match - over \$150,000

Contact:
Division of Recreation and Parks
Office of Information and Recreation Services
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, MS 500
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000
Phone: (850) 245-2501
Link: www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/bdrs/default.htm

Florida Forever Grant Program - This grant program is sponsored by the Florida Communities Trust and provides grants to eligible applicants for the acquisition of land for community-based parks, open spaces, and greenways that further the outdoor recreation and natural resource protection needs identified in local government comprehensive plans.

Grant/Match: Municipalities with populations greater than 10,000 are required to provide a minimum match of 25 percent of the total project cost. Small cities that are under the above threshold, and eligible non-profit environmental organizations, may apply for a 100 percent grant award.

Contact:
Department of Community Affairs



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*Division of Housing and Community Development
Florida Communities Trust
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2100
Ken Reecy, (850) 922-2207
Link: <http://www.floridacommunitiestrust.org/ParksandOpenSpace/>*

Kodak American Greenways Awards – Awards from this program can be used for mapping, ecological assessments, surveying, conferences, and design activities; developing brochures, interpretative displays, audio-visual productions, or public opinion surveys; hiring consultants; incorporating land trusts; building a footbridge; planning a bike path; or other creative projects. In general, grants can be used for all appropriate expenses needed to complete, expand, or improve a greenway project, including planning, technical assistance, legal, and other costs.

*Maximum Grant: \$2,500 (average \$500 - \$1,000)
Matching Requirement: Selection process includes extent to which the grant will result in matching funds or other support from public or private sources.
Application Deadline: June 30th, annually*

Conservation Reserve Program – The Conservation Reserve Program provides technical and financial assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers to address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns in an environmentally-beneficial and cost-effective manner. The program provides annual payments for 10-15 year contracts for participants.

*Program Contact: Astor Boozer, National Program
Manager, (202) 720-0242
Link: http://www.conservationfund.org/kodak_awards*

Land and Water Conservation Fund – Grants are available from FDEP through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This competitive grant program provides funds for planning and providing nationwide recreational opportunities. Property acquired or developed with funds from this program is required to perpetually maintain public recreation use. Grant amounts are announced prior to the submission period.

*Matching Ratio: 50:50
Contact:
Department of Environmental Protection
Office of Information and Recreation Services
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, MS 585
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000*

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) – The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy offers the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program to work with communities to conserve land and river resources. The park service provides technical assistance to any state or local agency. Assistance can include help with running public meetings, working with adjacent landowners to facilitate trail development, and involving the public in the planning and design of the trail.

*Grant/Match: \$500 to \$5,000
Deadline: Applications are due by August 1st for assistance beginning the following fiscal year (October 1st through September 30th). Assistance is for one year, and may be renewed for a second year upon request.*

*Contact:
Charlie Stockman
Chief, Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW, Org Code 2240
Washington, D.C. 20240
Phone: (202) 354-6900
Link: http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/contactus/cu_apply.html*

Florida Boating Improvement Program (FBIP) – The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission offers the Florida Boating Improvement Program (FBIP), which is a competitive grant. Funding from this program is available to local governments for enhancing recreational boating. Eligible projects include recreational channel marking, public launching facilities and enhancements to existing facilities, aquatic plant control, and other local boating-related issues.

*Contact:
Sandy Robertson
(850) 487-3755
FBIP@MyFWC.com*

Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) – Various programs through SWFWMD could be used to assist with the land acquisition and improvement partnerships necessary to improve water quality treatment and storage needs in support of redevelopment. With the pending changes to state water quality and treatment standards expected to be implemented in the near future, opportunities to establish master stormwater management facilities and conveyances are an important feature to support redevelopment, improve environmental protection and strengthen existing intergovernmental and private property owner cooperation.

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) offers financial grants to communities for neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and improvements to community facilities and services, especially in low- and moderate-income areas. Consideration to expand existing CDBG program funding within the redevelopment area and to seek both entitlement and non-entitlement funds can leverage local funds and support needed community and infrastructure improvements.

Federal Transportation Funds – The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) participates with organizations to support the local improvements to the federal highway system, including trail and related access improvements. Coordination with the local legislative delegation to review opportunities for annual federal transportation funding provides an opportunity to seek federal funds for local and regional transportation improvements that will support and encouragement redevelopment and improved mobility within Wauchula.

Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) offers funding on a competitive basis for infrastructure and non-infrastructure related projects within a two-mile radius of elementary and middle schools to improve the ability of students to walk or bicycle to school. Funding for infrastructure-related projects is available for the planning, design, and construction of facilities such as sidewalks, crosswalks and traffic signals. In order to apply for infrastructure-related funding, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Form #500-000-30 and the SRTS Student Arrival and Departure Tally Sheet must be completed and filed with FDOT District 1. Florida is no longer using a formal application or holding specific calls for applications for non-infrastructure programs, therefore the Non-Infrastructure Information Form can be filed at any time with the District 1 coordinator, as long as the District has available funds to commit.

*Contact:
Sarita Taylor
District 1 SRTS Coordinator
(863) 519-2216
sarita.taylor@dot.state.fl.us
Link: http://www.dot.state.fl.us/Safety/SRTS_files/SRTS.shtm*

Green Government Grants Program – House Bill 7135, the 2008 Energy and Economic Development Legislation signed by Governor Crist in June 2008, created the Florida Green Government Grants program. The Florida Energy &



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Climate Commission completed rule development earlier this year and the first grant awards were announced in the spring. Grant criteria were designed to target smaller communities and to help local governments, including municipalities, counties, and school districts, develop and implement “green” government programs. The green government programs will help identify and put into place cost-efficient solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve quality of life, and strengthen the state’s economy. Monitoring for future grant cycle announcements is recommended.

Link:

http://www.myfloridaclimate.com/climate_quick_links/florida_energy_climate_commission/grants_solar_rebates_incentives/green_government_grants_program

Clean Renewable Energy Bonds – Tax credit backed bonds for local government borrowing in support of alternative energy production can provide an additional source of funding to encourage redevelopment and economic expansion in Wauchula. The city’s and community redevelopment agency’s access to energy transmission facilities and historic power generation sites presents a unique opportunity for supporting economic revitalization and redevelopment. Additional information on Clean Renewable Energy Bonds can be found at <http://www.cleanenergyflorida.org/>.

Build America Bonds – Established through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, funds from these tax credit buy-down of taxable municipal purpose bonds by the federal government provides another alternative to consider and monitor for future use should these programs be continued in the future. Additional information and examples of other community use of these funds can be found at:

National Database for solar and renewable energy incentives - <http://www.dsireusa.org/> and Build America Bonds - <http://www.millercanfield.com/publications-alerts-550.html> or http://www.sarasotagov.com/InsideCityGovernment/Content/CAC/Communications/Releases/Sarasota_build_America_bonds.htm.

Urban Forestry – The Division of Forestry administers the Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program as part of its responsibilities under the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs. The Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program is a competitive grant program that provides funding for the development of activities relating to the establishment and maintenance of urban forests, including planting. Eligible program activities include those that foster education of the public, provide for tree plantings, surveys and inventories of existing canopy, staffing assistance and similar activities. Representatives of the Division of Forestry are available to work with each community awarded a grant

to provide technical assistance and ensure that program requirements are met. No more than 20 percent of the funds may be used for tree planting.

Grant/Match: Communities are required to provide a minimum match of 50 percent of the total project cost.

Contact:

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Purchasing Office

Mayo Building, Room SB-8

Tallahassee, FL 32399-0800

Charlie Marcus

Urban Forestry Coordinator

850/ 921-0300

Email: marcusc@doacs.state.fl.us

Link: http://www.fl-dof.com/forest_management/cfa_urban_grants.html

Section 319 Stormwater – The Nonpoint Source Management Section of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection administers grant money it receives from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through Section 319(h) of the Federal Clean Water Act. These grant funds can be used to implement projects or programs that will help to reduce nonpoint sources of pollution. Projects or programs must be conducted within the state’s non-point source (NPS) priority watersheds, which are the state’s Surface Water Improvement and Management Program (SWIM) watersheds and National Estuary Program waters.

Examples of fundable projects include: demonstration and evaluation of Best Management Practices (BMPs), nonpoint pollution reduction in priority watersheds, ground water protection from nonpoint sources, public education programs on nonpoint source management, etc. All approved projects will be contracted with the Department of Environmental Protection and managed by the staff of the Nonpoint Source Management Section. Project proposals are due each year in late May with project selection completed by September.

Grant/Match: Communities are required to provide a minimum match comprised of 40 percent nonfederal funding sources within the total project cost. These matching provisions allow other state and local funding sources to be utilized to leverage the federal program assistance.

Contact:

Nonpoint Source Management Program

2600 Blair Stone Road MS 3570

Tallahassee, FL, 32399-2400

850/ 245-7508

Link: <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/nonpoint/319h.htm>

Scenic Highway – Administered through the Florida Department of Transportation, the Scenic Highway program is designed to heighten awareness of historical and intrinsic resources - cultural, historical, archeological, recreational, natural and scenic - which collectively, enhance the overall traveling experience. Program participation provides subsequent benefits to the community as well, such as resource preservation, enhancement and protection. While the Florida Scenic Highways Program does not supply direct funding for those groups desiring Corridor designation, FDOT does provide support for helping find other funding opportunities. Note that FDOT reports that designated Scenic Highway Corridors typically have more success in getting grant money, compared with those not designated.

National Scenic Byways Grant - These grant funds include projects associated with safety improvements, construction of rest areas, passing lanes, etc. and protection of historical, archeological and cultural resources. For more information, contact the State Scenic Highways Coordinator at (850) 410-5894 and visit the National Scenic Byways website at <http://www.byways.org/learn/program.html>.

Transportation Enhancement Funds – Transportation Enhancement Funds may provide funding for several components within Wauchula upon successful development of a Corridor Management Plan. The Federal share shall not exceed 80 percent with matching 20 percent coming from State or local funds. However, FDOT is currently eligible to use “soft match” funds. This allows the Department to increase the Federal share to 100 percent by applying “earned toll credits” as the State match. Use of these funds must involve projects associated with the development of Corridor Management Plans after eligibility has been determined. For more information, please contact the Transportation Enhancement Coordinator at (850) 487-3985.

Cultural Grants Program - The Florida Department of State Division of Cultural Affairs provides grants of varying amounts to non-profit organizations and political subdivisions engaged in cultural programming. The cultural disciplines include dance, folk arts, theater, visual arts, literature and media arts. The applicant is required to match the grant from local funds, a portion of which may be donated materials or services with a specific cost value. Additionally, the Cultural Facilities Program provides financial support for the renovation of cultural buildings such as museums, performing arts centers and theaters. Current funding levels in the program have been negatively impacted by state budget cuts, but the program should be monitored for potential future leveraging of community redevelopment funds. For more information regarding Cultural Grants Programs, please contact the Bureau of Grants Services of the Division of Cultural Affairs at (850) 487-2980 and visit their website at <http://www.florida-arts.org/grants/>.



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Public-Private Partnerships - Encouragement of private reinvestment and activity within the Wauchula Community Redevelopment Area can continue to benefit from public-private partnerships. The CRA's existing grant program to local property owners and business in the downtown area represents an example of the kinds of activities that fall within this category. Typically, a public-private partnership (P3) is a contractual agreement between a public agency and a private sector entity. Through this agreement, the skills and assets of each sector (public and private) are shared in delivering a service or facility for the use of the general public. In addition to the sharing of resources, each party shares in the risks and rewards potential in the delivery of the service and/or facility. Consideration to expand the range and variety of P3 program elements is recommended as another tool to support both programmatic and facility/building improvements in the core CRA.