



ALACHUA CRA
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Business Facade Grant Program

Policies & Procedures

Application Packet
2023

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PURPOSE & GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

The purpose of the City of Alachua Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Business facade Grant Program (Program) is to provide assistance to rehabilitate the facades of commercial buildings within the Community Redevelopment Area.

Grant funds are awarded to projects that best facilitate and foster the goals and objectives of the CRA Amended Community Redevelopment Plan and the CRA Market Study and Economic Development Implementation Plan. A copy of these plans may be found on the CRA's website.

The CRA and CRA Advisory Board (CRAAB) use the *Business Facade Grant Program Funding Priority Rating Sheet* to determine funding recommendations and award decisions. A copy of this Rating Sheet is attached as Appendix B to these Policies & Procedures.

The Policies and Procedures are meant to provide applicants with important information about the Business Facade Grant Program requirements. Applicants should use this document as a guide when applying for a grant in order to make sure that all requirements are met.

AVAILABLE GRANT FUNDING AND MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

The Program provides a 50% matching grant between \$500 and \$12,500 for façade improvement project costs. Signage shall only be a reimbursable expense of 50% matching up to \$3,000 and only if the CRA, in its sole discretion approves the sign design. Grant recipients must provide a cash or loan match of 50% of total project cost. Funding is appropriated annually by the CRA, and is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Applicants must finish the project and pay all project costs before being eligible for reimbursement.

Applicants are reminded that grant awards are discretionary and there is no entitlement for anyone to receive a grant. The grant criteria are guidelines, not guarantees, for grant awards. If an Applicant meets all grant criteria, a grant may or may not be awarded at the CRA's sole discretion based upon funding limitations, competing applications and/or competing priorities. All grant applications will be reviewed and grants awarded without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

APPLICANTS AND PROPERTY ELIGIBILITY

The Business Facade Grant Program is available for commercial properties located within the Redevelopment Area. For a map of the Community Redevelopment Area, please see Appendix D.

Eligible buildings must have a facade that is visible from a street or parking lot. Buildings located on a corner lot containing a single business may be considered to have two or more facades. If a building is divided into more than one business unit, each business unit may be considered a separate facade if each unit has a separate primary entrance and each

occupant has an individual Local Business Tax Receipt. If a building is a multi-use building (e.g. residential and commercial), only the commercial portion of the building is eligible under the Program. Buildings used exclusively for residential purposes are not eligible for the Program. If Applicant is not the owner of the property to be improved, they must receive authorization from the property owner.

Property Requirements

- Located within the City of Alachua Community Redevelopment Area (see Appendix D.)
- Privately owned commercial buildings.
- Building must be structurally sound.
- No past due utility bills (including but not limited to water, wastewater, electric, and garbage).
- No past due property tax bills.
- No City liens, or open permits.
- Must be occupied at the time funding is requested or, if unoccupied at the time of application, have a bona fide lease or rental agreement (must be occupied by completion of the project). Under no circumstances will funds be expended on a building that will not be immediately occupied after rehabilitation.

Occupant Requirements

- Must have all applicable licensing.
- Must have valid Local Business Tax Receipt at the time of grant application and at project completion.
- Use must be permitted by the City's LDRs (see Table 4.1-1) or have obtained a Special Exception Permit.
- Must be legally constituted business.
- Must be a commercial business.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Grant funds may only be used for projects that substantially improve the aesthetics of the exterior facade of a commercial building and that facilitate redevelopment consistent with the CRA Community Redevelopment Plan. Projects must also be consistent with all Federal, State, and local laws and regulations, including without limitation, the City's Comprehensive Plan, Code of Ordinances, and Land Development Regulations.

The total project costs may only include labor and materials. Labor is only eligible for reimbursement if performed by a contractor or entity other than the applicant. No building owner, lessor, lessee, tenant, occupant, employee, or immediate relative of the applicant, either personally or corporately, shall be paid to serve as a contractor or subcontractor for the work to be performed. **The cost of paint is a reimbursable expense whether or not it is applied by a contractor.**

All contractors must have a General or Building contractor's license (Class A or B) as required by Chapter 489, Part I, Florida Statutes, or appropriate licensure as required for the type of work to be performed.

Permit fees and project design fees (i.e., architectural or engineering services) are not reimbursable expenses. Additionally, any work performed before the grant is approved will not be eligible for reimbursement by the Program.

All Applicants must disclose any personal or business relationship with members of the City Commission or City employees at the time of application. Applicants must be approved by the CRA if they have an apparent conflict of interest and are otherwise eligible to receive assistance through this Program.

Code violations may be corrected under this Program, but no funds will be reimbursed until all code violations are addressed and the property is found to be in compliance with applicable codes.

Improvements must be compatible and complementary to buildings located on the same block on both sides of the street. Strikingly different design treatments, including color, from one storefront to the next shall be avoided.

Examples of Eligible Projects

- Refurbishing of exterior walls, including repainting, repairs, re-siding or similar cosmetic or structural improvements.
- Removal of false facades.
- Facade cleaning other than general maintenance.
- Stucco restoration or other exterior nonstructural masonry repair.
- Painting (colors must be compatible or complementary to surrounding buildings).
- Replacement of damaged windows or doors.
- Installment or improvements to permanent awnings, canopies, or other coverings over windows or walkways.
- Adding or increasing windows of storefront.
- Electrical repairs or additions (directly related to exterior or display window), lights, or awnings.
- Decorative additions such as sconces and other architectural features.
- Code violation corrections which also enhance the aesthetics of the façade.

Examples of Ineligible Projects

- Improvements made prior to grant award.
- Roof repair or replacement.

- Interior renovations.
- Non-fixed improvements such as removable awnings with no fixed improvements to the building, removable equipment, etc.
- General maintenance.
- Payment for sweat equity.
- Non-aesthetic improvements.

APPLICATION STEPS

Before a property or business owner applies for Program funding, they must meet with CRA and City Staff to review the Grant Policies and Procedures and any permitting requirements. After this meeting, an applicant may begin the application process.

Applications will be accepted on the **first day of each month**. If this date falls on a non-City business day, the deadline shall be the next City business day. The application will be reviewed by Staff within 10 business days of the application submission. If an application is incomplete, it will be returned and the applicant will be allowed 10 business days from the notice that the application is incomplete to resubmit. The *Application for Facade Grant* is located in Appendix A.

Designs must be of a professional quality and must clearly depict the proposed improvements. When required for the type of construction proposed, plans must be signed and sealed by a registered architect or professional engineer (as applicable). All designs must be in compliance with the applicable laws and regulations, including the City's LDRs and the Florida Building Code.

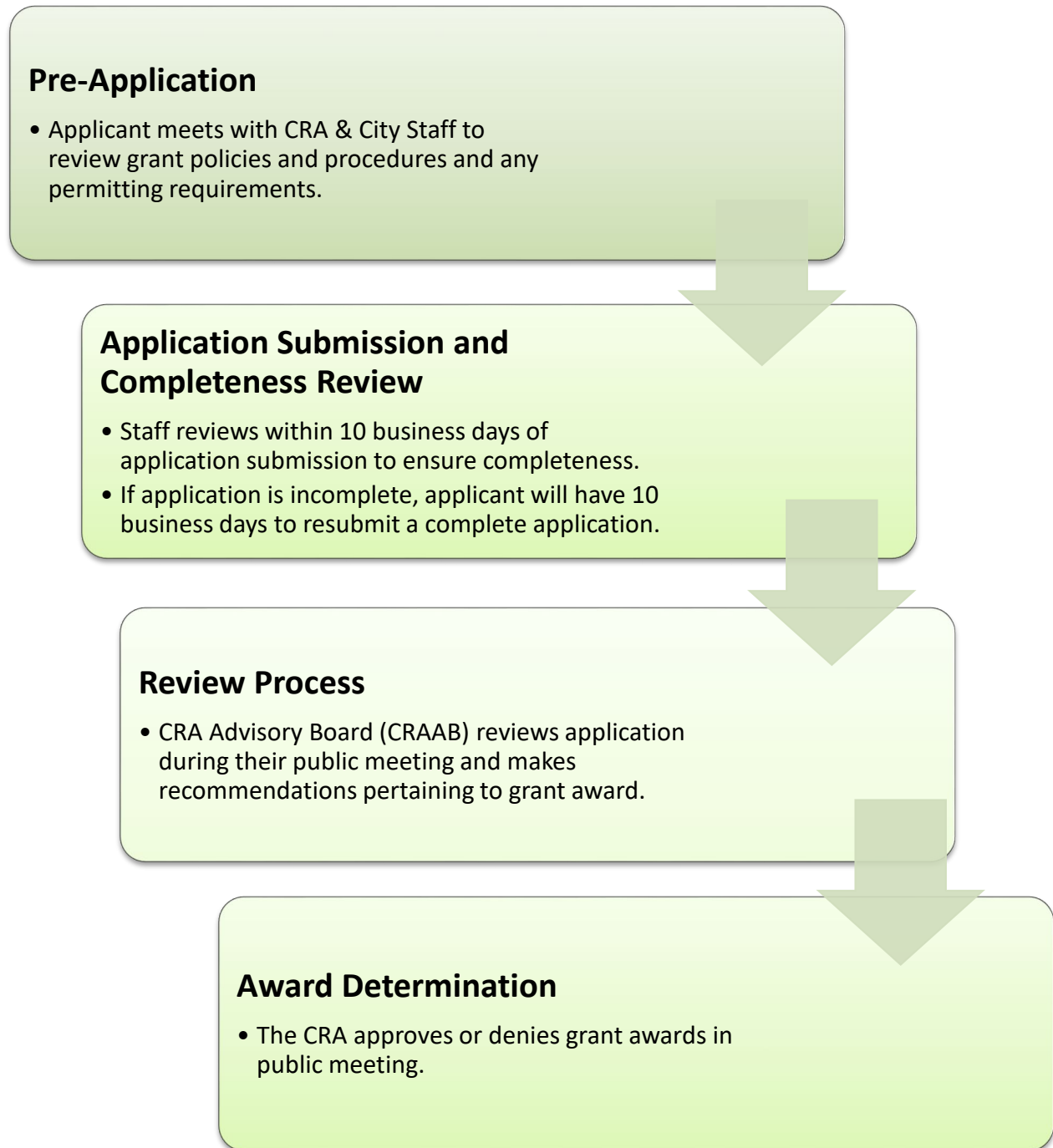
Required Materials to Submit with Application

- Current photos of building and issues that will be resolved under the Program.
- Signed and sealed plans (if required by City Building Department for the type of work proposed).
- Sketches, drawings, plans or architectural renderings which clearly depict the proposed improvements.
- Information regarding project components such as color swatches, pictures of added features, etc.
- Proof property taxes are current.
- A copy of Local Business Tax Receipt.
- Proof property is current in utility bills.
- Copy of a lease or rental agreement that indicates building will be occupied after rehabilitation (if applicable).
- Two written contractor estimates if purchase or labor is \$2,500 or greater (staff will review for reasonableness of cost).

Applications will be reviewed during a CRA Advisory Board (CRAAB) meeting. This Board will make a recommendation to the CRA, who will make the grant awards in its sole discretion. For a schedule of these meetings please visit the CRA's webpage at www.cityofalachua.com.

The award of a grant must meet all public record requirements (including the right to audit) and other public purpose actions and findings necessary to establish the foregoing. For details about Florida Public Records law requirements (F.S. 119) please see Appendix C.

Figure 1: Application Steps



PROJECT STEPS & DEADLINES

Once a grant is awarded by the CRA in a public meeting, the project must begin within 80 days and be completed within 120 days of grant approval. Upon a showing of good cause, the applicant may request a 30 day extension. No more than three extensions shall be granted. Extension requests shall be reviewed and approved by the CRA Executive Director. Minor changes to the awarded Project must also be approved by the CRA Executive Director and substantial changes must be approved by the CRA.

Applicants must finish the project and pay all project costs before being eligible for reimbursement. Funds will be reimbursed at the completion of the project and upon verification that all grant criteria has been met. In no event will the reimbursement amount exceed the amount originally awarded.

Prior to beginning any work, the applicant must obtain all necessary permits, which may include, but is not limited to, a Certificate of Appropriateness and/or a building permit(s). Contractor estimates and quotes must also be reviewed by CRA staff for reasonableness of cost and be approved for such purposes before the applicant enters into a contract with the contractor and before work is performed. The CRA reserves the right to verify any and all costs associated with the construction for improvements funded by the Program.

Figure #2 contains step-by-step information about the project process.

What to Submit for Reimbursement

- Request for Reimbursement Form.
- Documentation of all project costs:
 - Cancelled checks.
 - Detailed invoices.
 - Paid receipts.
 - Signed statement attesting to construction costs incurred.
- Contractor's license number (if applicable).
- Proof of payment for project improvements (paid invoices, receipts, etc.).
- Before and after photos of project improvements.
- Copy of Certificate of Occupancy or Completion (if applicable).
- Copy of Certificate of Appropriateness (if applicable).

Figure 2: Grant & Project Steps



CORRECTION OF PROGRAM VIOLATIONS

If the provisions of this Program are violated, the applicant will be notified of any noted violations, and will be given 60 days to correct the violations. If the violations are not corrected within this time frame, the building will not be eligible for any further benefits under this Program.

REQUIREMENTS FOLLOWING COMPLETION

After the project has been completed and grant reimbursements have been made, the applicant has an obligation to keep the property maintained and not make any substantial changes to the project improvements without approval by the CRA for two years after the completion of the project. Failure to do so may exclude the grant recipient from future grants.

In order to allow funding for as many applicants as possible, the project building is not eligible for the Business Facade Grant for three years after receiving assistance.

By accepting assistance, the building owner and/or tenant agree that the CRA may use images of the property before and after renovation.

City of Alachua Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)
 Business Facade Grant Program
 Funding Priority Rating Sheet

ABOUT

The Business Facade Grant Program Funding Priority Rating Sheet offers a point system that rates how well the proposed Project meets the objectives listed in the CRA Amended Community Redevelopment Plan and the CRA Market Study & Economic Development Implementation Plan. Projects must get a **minimum of 30 points** to be eligible for Facade Grant Program Funding.

Through the facade improvement grant program, the CRA provides assistance to businesses to improve the attractiveness of their properties, and thereby works to achieve the CRA's goal to rehabilitate, conserve, and redevelop the Community Redevelopment Area. The CRA strives to improve economic development, historic preservation, and streetscape through grant program projects.

1. Economic Development

It is the CRA's intention to incentivize business opportunities that enhance the character of the CRA Area. A diverse balance of places to shop, walk, meet and make acquaintances is an important objective for the district to achieve long-term economic resilience. As listed in the CRA Market Study & Economic Development Implementation Plan, businesses types that the CRA is focused on are specialty markets, sporting goods stores, coffee shops, bakeries, antique stores, breweries, and bed and breakfasts.

<u>Economic Development</u>	<u>Points Total</u>
Facade is visible from Main Street, US 441, or SR 235 or is located within a block of a cross-street to Main Street US 441, or SR 235.	
YES	5
NO	0
Business is a use recommended to be targeted to revitalize downtown by the <i>Alachua CRA Market Study & Economic Development Implementation Plan</i> (see page 40):	
YES	10
NO	0
TOTAL	

NOTES:

2. Historic Preservation

Rehabilitation of historic properties is an important CRA objective. As encouraged in the CRA Community Redevelopment Plan, historic properties “should be maintained and respected in a manner that upholds their integrity as cultural resources.”

The National Register of Historic Places has designated an area within the CRA as the “City of Alachua Downtown Historic District”. There are 102 buildings within this district designated as structures that add to the historical integrity or architectural qualities of the District, referred to within the Master Site File as “contributing structures”. Improvements to these structures should preserve and restore the historic nature of the building.

Structures that are not listed as contributing to the City of Alachua Downtown Historic District should be considerate to the historic nature of its surroundings, and improvements made under the Program and should complement the character of the District as a whole.

<u>Historic Preservation</u>	<u>Points Total</u>
If the property is a “contributing structure” to the City of Alachua Downtown Historic District the proposed improvements restores or preserves the historic nature of the building.	
Poor	0
Fair	10
Good	20
If structure is not a “contributing structure” to the City of Alachua Downtown Historic District, the proposed improvements respect the historic character of the Community Redevelopment Area and the Downtown Historic District.	
Poor	0
Fair	5
Good	15
TOTAL	

NOTES:

3. Streetscape & Aesthetics:

Commercial areas benefit from enhanced streetscapes for pedestrians. Such improvements can lead to better connectivity between commercial businesses within the district. Improvements that help to create a safe and pleasant experience for pedestrians include: human scale lighting, large bay windows, decorative entries, transparent windows, awnings, and a variation of façade materials. By accommodating pedestrians, the space can become a place where people want to be, further activating them.

<u>Streetscape Aesthetics and Functionality</u>	<u>Points</u>
Improvements enhances building aesthetics on a pedestrian scale and creates an overall streetscape of visual interest.	
Poor	0
Fair	10
Good	20
TOTAL	
Improvements are complementary to surrounding buildings.	
Poor	0
Fair	10
Good	20
TOTAL	

<u>Improvement</u>	<u>Points</u>
Current condition or appearance of the building façade.	
Poor	20
Fair	10
Good	0
TOTAL	

NOTES:

4.

TOTAL POINTS EARNED:	
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Notes:

**City of Alachua Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)
Business Facade Grant Program (Program)
Florida Public Records Law Requirements**

PUBLIC RECORDS - GRANT RECIPIENT shall allow public access to all documents, papers, letters, or other material subject to the provisions of Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, made or received by the GRANT RECIPIENT and their contractors in conjunction with this Contract. Specifically, the GRANT RECIPIENT must:

- a) Keep and maintain public records that ordinarily and necessarily would be required by the CRA in order to perform the services being performed by the GRANT RECIPIENT.
- b) Provide the public with access to public records on the same terms and conditions that the CRA would provide the records and at a cost that does not exceed the cost provided in Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, or as otherwise provided by law.
- c) Ensure that public records that are exempt or confidential and exempt from public records disclosure requirements are not disclosed except as authorized by law.
- d) Meet all requirements for retaining public records and transfer, at no cost, to the CRA all public records in possession of the GRANT RECIPIENT upon termination of the contract and destroy any duplicate public records that are exempt or confidential and exempt from public records disclosure requirements. All records stored electronically must be provided to the CRA in a format that is compatible with the information technology systems of the CRA.

The GRANT RECIPIENT shall promptly provide the CRA with a copy of any request to inspect or copy public records in possession of the GRANT RECIPIENT and shall promptly provide the CRA a copy of the GRANT RECIPIENT's response to each such request. Failure to grant such public access will be grounds for immediate termination of this Contract by the CRA.

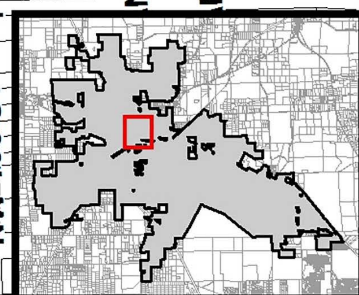
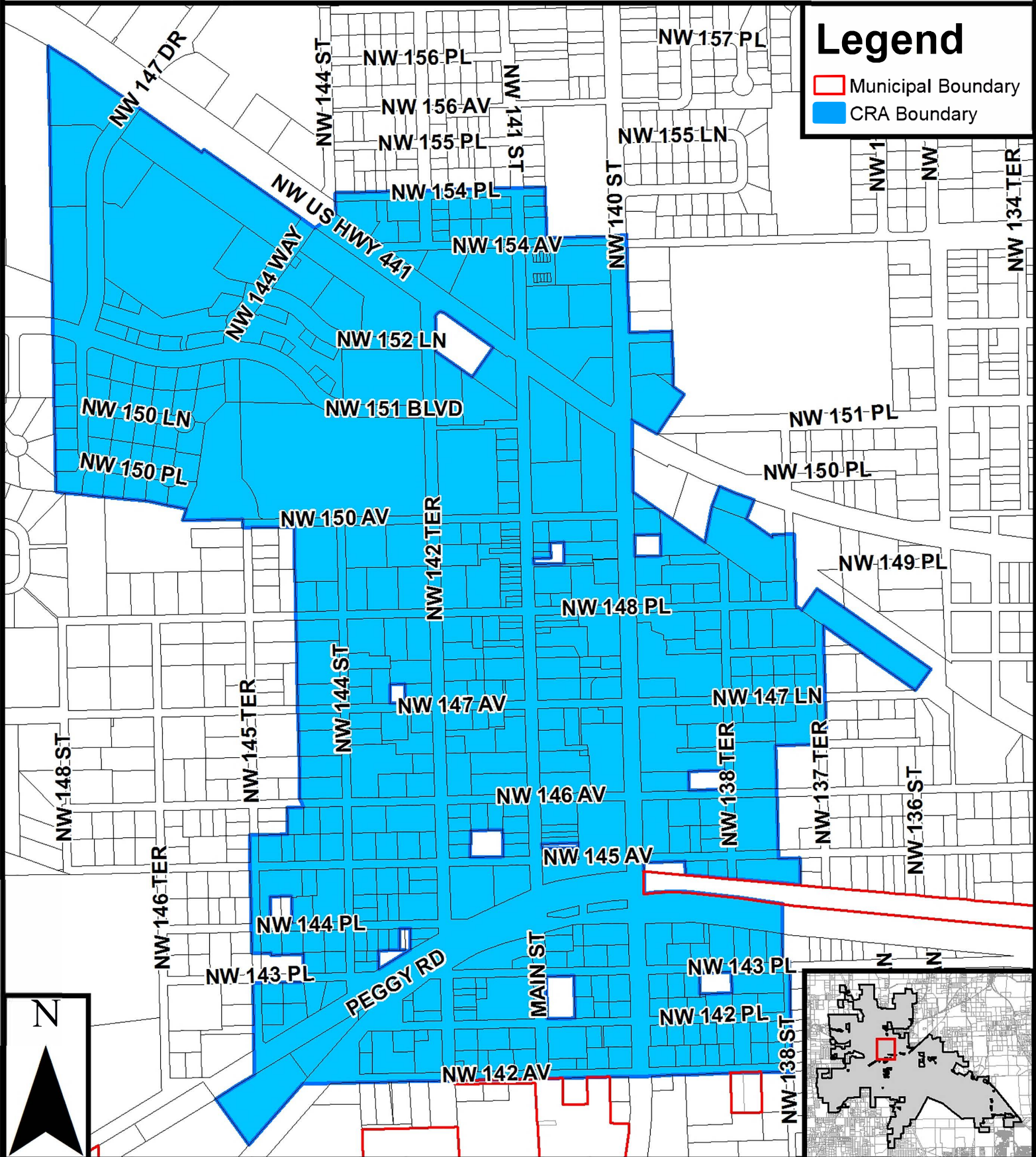
This provision will apply to all services provided unless the GRANT RECIPIENT can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that it is not or was not acting on behalf of the CRA under Florida law. The GRANT RECIPIENT will be held liable for plaintiff attorney fees and costs if a suit is properly filed and the court finds that the GRANT RECIPIENT unlawfully refused to comply with a public records request within a reasonable time.

The GRANT RECIPIENT shall contact Deputy City Clerk LeAnne Williams at (386) 418-6100 or lwilliams@cityofalachua.com, concerning any questions the GRANT RECIPIENT may have regarding the duty of the GRANT RECIPIENT to provide Public Records.

THE CRA OF ALACHUA RIGHT TO AUDIT

RIGHT TO AUDIT. The GRANT RECIPIENT agrees to furnish such supporting detail as may be required by the CRA to support charges or invoices, to make available for audit purposes all records covering charges pertinent to the purchase and to make appropriate adjustments in the event discrepancies are found. The CRA will pay the cost of any audit. The CRA shall have the right to audit the GRANT RECIPIENT's records pertaining to the work/product for a period of three (3) years after final payment.

Appendix D: Map of the Community Redevelopment Area



Prepared by the City of Alachua
 Planning & Community Development Department
 Prepared October 23, 2012
 Revised July 2013

DISCLAIMER: Data is provided "as is" without warranty of any representation of accuracy, timeliness, or completeness. The burden of determining accuracy, timeliness, or completeness for use rests solely on the requestor. The City makes no warranties, expressed or implied, as to the use of the data. The requestor acknowledges and accepts the limitations of the data, including the fact that the data is dynamic and in a constant state of maintenance.



Business Facade Grant Program Property Owner Authorization

I, _____, understand that _____, is the leaseholder (the "Lessee" of the property located at _____ (the "Property" and is _____ considering making certain improvements to the Property which may be funded in part by the City of Alachua Community Redevelopment Agency Business Facade Grant Program, hereinafter referred to as "Program." For the purposes of this authorization, hereinafter the Community Redevelopment Agency shall be referred to as "CRA" and the City of Alachua as "City".

I have reviewed the Program Policies and Procedures and the Program application to be submitted to the CRA by the Lessee. I agree and consent to the proposed improvements to the building located at the Property, as described and depicted in the Lessee's application for participation in the Program. I understand that the Lessee shall assume responsibility for completing all proposed improvements, and that I am not financially responsible for the Lessee's participation in the Program.

I understand and agree that neither the CRA nor the City shall assume any responsibility or liability for the improvements proposed by the Lessee or any other part for any action or failure of any contractor or other third party acting on behalf of the Lessee, and in no way does the CRA or the City guarantee any work to be done or material to be supplied for.

I further agree to hold the CRA and the City harmless from and indemnify them for and against any and all claims which may be brought or raised against the CRA, the City, or any of its officers, representatives, agents or contractors acting on their behalf regarding any matters relevant to the participant obligations under the Program.

I affirm to the CRA and the City that the Lessee holds a valid lease which shall remain valid for no less than six (6 months following the date of application for Program funding.

I have read the above statements and acknowledge and agree that the terms stated therein are met. I have no objection to the Lessee pursuing the funding under the Program for the improvements described in the Lessee's application for participation in the Program, and I authorize the Lessee to make the proposed improvements to the building at the Property as described in the Lessee's application.

Signature of Property Owner

Date

Typed or Printed Name of Property Owner

State of _____ County of _____

The foregoing application is acknowledged before me this _____ day of _____, 20____, by _____

_____, who is/are personally known to me, or who has/have produced _____ as identification.

NOTARY SEAL

Signature of Notary Public, State of _____