

Report No. 2021-116  
January 2021

**STATE OF FLORIDA AUDITOR GENERAL**

**Operational Audit**

**CITY OF MELBOURNE,  
MELBOURNE COMMUNITY  
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY,  
AND  
OLDE EAU GALLIE RIVERFRONT  
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**



Sherrill F. Norman, CPA  
Auditor General

### **Mayor, Council Members, and City Manager**

During the period October 2017 through March 2019, Kathy Meehan was Mayor, and the following individuals served as City of Melbourne Vice Mayor or Council Member:

Debbie Thomas, Vice Mayor from November 27, 2018;  
Vice Mayor through November 27, 2017

Yvonne Minus, Vice Mayor November 28, 2017, through November 26, 2018

Paul Alfrey, Council Member

Mark LaRusso, Council Member from November 27, 2018

Teresa Lopez, Council Member through November 26, 2018

Betty Moore, Council Member through November 26, 2018

Julie Sanders, Council Member from November 27, 2018

Tim Thomas, Council Member

Michael McNees served as City Manager through November 30, 2018, and Shannon Lewis served as Interim City Manager December 1 through December 10, 2018, and then City Manager from December 11, 2018.

### **Community Redevelopment Agencies' Board Members**

The Melbourne Community Redevelopment Agency Board and Olde Eau Gallie Riverfront Community Redevelopment Agency Board each consist of seven members who also serve as the City of Melbourne Mayor, Vice Mayor, and City Council. During the period October 2017 through March 2019, the Mayor and Vice Mayor served as the Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, of the Community Redevelopment Agencies' Boards.

The team leader was Shane L. Herman, CPA, and the audit was supervised by Derek H. Noonan, CPA.

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# CITY OF MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY, AND OLDE EAU GALLIE RIVERFRONT COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

## **SUMMARY**

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This operational audit of the City of Melbourne (City), the Melbourne Community Redevelopment Agency (Downtown CRA),<sup>1</sup> and the Olde Eau Gallie Riverfront Community Redevelopment Agency (Riverfront CRA) focused on selected processes and administrative activities. Our audit disclosed the following:

### **CITY OF MELBOURNE**

**Finding 1:** The City did not always follow City policies when making donations to external organizations.

**Finding 2:** City records did not always demonstrate that the City appropriately monitored the use of City donations to external organizations.

**Finding 3:** The City did not periodically obtain and compare the fair market lease values of City-owned properties leased to or used by external organizations to the value of public services provided by the organizations using the property.

**Finding 4:** City records did not demonstrate that the acquisition of land for pollution remediation purposes was prudent and appropriate, that the City Council was provided the necessary information to make an informed decision, or that the acquisition was the most cost-effective or advantageous option for the City.

**Finding 5:** The City had not established effective land acquisition policies and procedures. Absent such, there is an increased risk that the City may acquire land that either cannot be used for City-intended purposes or requires significant remediation costs.

**Finding 6:** City records did not document that a systematic and rational methodology was used to allocate City costs to the City CRAs.

### **Downtown CRA AND Riverfront CRA**

**Finding 7:** The Downtown CRA and the Riverfront CRA each lacked comprehensive policies and procedures governing all aspects of CRA operations.

**Finding 8:** For the 2018 calendar year, the published meeting notices for the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA meetings were included in the notice for City Council meetings. However, since the City Council did not always convene as the governing body for the CRAs at the meetings, the notice did not sufficiently identify when CRA public meetings would be held.

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<sup>1</sup> City personnel refer to the Melbourne CRA as the Downtown CRA to distinguish it from the City's other two CRAs (i.e., the Olde Eau Gallie Riverfront CRA and Babcock Street CRA).

**Finding 9:** The Riverfront CRA Plan did not comply with the provisions in State law requiring identification of up-to-date, publicly funded capital projects to be undertaken and detailed statements of the projected costs of redevelopment.

**Finding 10:** Contrary to State law, the Downtown CRA- and Riverfront CRA-adopted budgets for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal years did not account for balances brought forward from prior fiscal years. In addition, CRA budget transparency could be improved.

**Finding 11:** Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA records did not demonstrate that moneys remaining in the CRA trust funds on the last day of the 2016-17 and 2017-18 fiscal years was disposed of in accordance with State law.

**Finding 12:** For the 2016-17 and 2017-18 fiscal years, the City transferred Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA resources to City capital projects funds before the City expended amounts for capital projects. As a result, the CRA trust funds did not report any expenditures, reducing transparency of CRA operations to the public and possibly affecting the determination of whether a CRA met the statutory threshold for a separate financial audit.

**Finding 13:** Downtown CRA procedures were not sufficient to ensure that project developers provided letters of credit, performance bonds, or other forms of security necessary to protect CRA interests.

**Finding 14:** The Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA need to enhance policies and procedures to ensure that funds donated to external organizations are used for their intended public purposes.

## **BACKGROUND**

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### **CITY OF MELBOURNE**

The City of Melbourne (City) was formed in 1969 as a result of the unification of the former cities of Melbourne and Eau Gallie.<sup>2</sup> The City is located in Brevard County and has an estimated population of 83,349.<sup>3</sup> The City is governed by the City Council composed of six elected Council members and an elected Mayor. The City Council is responsible for enacting ordinances, resolutions, and policies governing the City, as well as appointing the City Manager. The City Manager serves as the Chief Administrative and Executive Officer and is responsible for the administration of all City affairs.

The City provides a full range of services including general government administration; police and fire protection, public works, water and sewer service; a stormwater utility; recreational activities, including two golf courses; and an airport.

### **DOWNTOWN CRA AND RIVERFRONT CRA**

State law<sup>4</sup> authorizes the creation of community redevelopment agencies (CRAs) by counties and municipalities for the purpose of redeveloping slums and blighted areas that are injurious to the public

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<sup>2</sup> Chapter 69-879, Laws of Florida.

<sup>3</sup> *Florida Population Estimates for Counties and Municipalities, April 2019*; Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research.

<sup>4</sup> Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes, also known as the Community Redevelopment Act of 1969.

health, safety, morals, and welfare of residents and for which there is a shortage of housing affordable to residents of low or moderate income, including the elderly. CRA funding is accomplished through tax increment financing provided by applicable taxing authorities and expenditures from such funding must be in accordance with an approved plan. In addition, CRA revenues and expenditures must be accounted for in a separate trust fund.

The Melbourne CRA, referred to as the Downtown CRA,<sup>5</sup> was created as a dependent special district of the City of Melbourne on August 24, 1982, under the authority granted by State law<sup>6</sup> and City ordinances.<sup>7</sup> The Downtown CRA's boundaries include approximately 322 acres and its activities are accounted for by the City within the Downtown Redevelopment Fund.

The Olde Eau Gallie Riverfront CRA (Riverfront CRA) was created as a dependent special district of the City of Melbourne on May 22, 2001, under the authority granted by State law,<sup>8</sup> County resolutions,<sup>9</sup> and City ordinances.<sup>10</sup> The Riverfront CRA's boundaries include approximately 297 acres and its activities are accounted for by the City within the Eau Gallie Redevelopment Fund.

The governing bodies of the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA are composed of the Melbourne City Council, and the City manages the CRAs' operations. In addition, each CRA has a CRA Advisory Committee, which is tasked with reviewing projects and programs and making recommendations to their respective CRA Boards. The CRA Advisory Committees are composed of seven members and two alternate members appointed by the City Council and are either City residents or people who conduct business or own property within the CRA.

## ***FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

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### **CITY OF MELBOURNE**

#### **Finding 1: Donation Policies**

The Attorney General has opined<sup>11</sup> that a local government public purpose may be carried out through donations to external organizations provided the local governmental entity determines that an entity purpose is served by such donations and proper safeguards are implemented to assure the accomplishment of that purpose. To exercise controls over City donations, the City adopted policies<sup>12</sup> for the Grants-in-Aid Program (GIA Program) that limit donations to \$10,000 per organization and require that:

- Funds donated to external organizations be used to benefit City residents.

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<sup>5</sup> City personnel refer to the Melbourne CRA as the Downtown CRA to distinguish it from the City's other two CRAs (i.e., the Olde Eau Gallie Riverfront CRA and Babcock Street CRA).

<sup>6</sup> Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes, also known as the Community Redevelopment Act of 1969.

<sup>7</sup> City of Melbourne Ordinance No. 1982-38.

<sup>8</sup> Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes, also known as the Community Redevelopment Act of 1969.

<sup>9</sup> Brevard County Resolution No. 2000-249.

<sup>10</sup> City of Melbourne Ordinance No. 2001-23.

<sup>11</sup> Attorney General Opinion No. 2002-18.

<sup>12</sup> City of Melbourne Council Policy No. 10.

- External organizations seeking donations complete and submit applications to the City.
- A City review committee rank each applicant based on preselected criteria, determine the amount to recommend for donation to each organization, and prepare a formal recommendation and present it to the City Council for approval.
- Organizations approved by the City Council to receive donations sign a contract<sup>13</sup> with the City prior to the organizations' receipt of the donated funds; the contracts establish applicable activities or services to be performed by the external organization as well as reporting, record retention, and audit requirements.

While the City adopted policies for exercising controls over donations, the City Council occasionally made donations apart from the GIA Program. During the period October 2017 through March 2019, the City made 21 donations totaling \$167,973 to 16 different external organizations, including \$100,000 to 13 organizations following the GIA Program requirements and \$67,973 to the other 3 organizations. However, donations to the 3 organizations were made without a City review committee ranking applicants, determining a recommended donation amount, and preparing a formal donation recommendation to the City Council. In addition, for 1 of the 3 organizations, City donations exceeded \$10,000<sup>14</sup> and, for another organization, the City did not establish a contract when donating \$7,000 to partially offset the costs to organize a parade.

In response to our inquiry, City personnel indicated that the donations to the 3 organizations were not subject to the GIA Program requirements because the City Council dealt directly with the organizations and approved the donations. Notwithstanding, compliance with GIA Program requirements, or subjecting donations to other procedures established for donations apart from the GIA Program, would help ensure and demonstrate that City donations are distributed fairly to interested external organizations and used by such organizations only for intended purposes.

**Recommendation: To ensure that donations to external organizations are distributed fairly and used for intended purposes, the City should comply with the requirements of the GIA Program or, alternatively, establish effective procedures for donations made apart from that Program.**

## **Finding 2: Donation Monitoring**

As noted in Finding 1, the City made 21 donations totaling \$167,973 to 16 different external organizations during the period October 2017 through March 2019. Generally, standard contracts executed by the City with external organizations require the organizations to submit to the City quarterly and annual progress reports identifying the activities performed using donated funds and the number of persons assisted. The contracts also require the organizations to maintain adequate supporting documentation to account for the expenditure of City-donated funds, including financial accounts, client demographic records, descriptions of activities or services, and other related documents and records. The standard contracts further provide the City the right to examine such documentation at any time during the term of the

<sup>13</sup> The standard grant funding agreement (contract) requires the recipient of the donated funds to provide the City an annual program synopsis identifying outcome data that reflects evidence-based practices, including activities performed and number of persons assisted. In addition, the contract provides that the expenditure of the donated funds “may require periodic auditing to ensure that such funds will be used only for a municipal purpose.” Although not specified in the contract, in this context, “auditing” could include examinations by designated City personnel of the external organization’s records.

<sup>14</sup> The organization received \$50,000 to assist homeless City residents pursuant to a City-approved contract.

contract and for a period of 5 years after the contract's expiration. Periodic examinations of such documentation by City personnel are essential to effectively monitor City-donated funds to ensure that the funds are used for the intended public purposes.

To determine whether the City effectively monitored the external organizations that received City donations during the period October 2017 through September 2018, we examined City records and activities for selected donations totaling \$57,500 made pursuant to the GIA Program to 10 organizations, and selected donations totaling \$64,454 made to 3 other organizations.<sup>15</sup> For 11 of the 13 organizations,<sup>16</sup> the contracts required the organizations to submit quarterly or annual progress reports, as applicable, to the City by October 2018 and authorized the City to examine organization documents and records supporting the contracted activities. Our examination disclosed that, for 5 organizations, the City received organization records documenting the use of the City-donated funds or the City already had records of in-kind City services rendered to the organizations, such as City utilities or City facility use. However, as of July 2020, or 21 months after the October 2018 required date, City personnel had not received documents and records supporting and substantiating the use of City-donated funds for 8 organizations.

In response to our inquiry, City personnel indicated that the required annual and quarterly reports constitute sufficient documentation to evidence the expenditure of the donated funds for their intended purposes without City examination of organization documents and records supporting the contracted activities. In addition, City personnel indicated that they read the submitted reports for appropriateness to determine if the external organization operations are consistent with the request for funding and that the funds are used to support the organization operations. City personnel also indicated that there were no discrepancies identified in the review of the annual and quarterly reports and; therefore, it was not necessary to further examine the organizations' expenditures and uses of City-donated funds. Notwithstanding these responses, annual and quarterly reports provided to the City by external organizations only included a general overview of the organizations' activities during the 2017-18 fiscal year and, as such, lacked sufficient detail to demonstrate that the donations were expended in accordance with the contracts.

For example, one external organization received a \$5,000 City donation during the 2017-18 fiscal year and provided statistics on the number of people served by a particular branch of the organization and quantitative indicators of success, such as the number of branch members who achieved a certain grade point average in school, but did not include records specifying how the City-donated funds were utilized. Absent periodic monitoring by City personnel of external organization documentation, as allowed by the contracts, there is an increased risk that donated funds may not be used for the intended public purposes.

In addition, we examined City monitoring efforts related to two City donations totaling \$15,000 made to an external organization, referred to as EO1, in September 2015 and January 2016 for roof repairs on a

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<sup>15</sup> The donations to the 3 other organizations include amounts of \$50,000 and \$7,000, as discussed in Finding 1, and \$7,454 of the \$10,973 donated to the Melbourne Police Athletic League.

<sup>16</sup> For one organization, the terms of the City donation were contained and documented in a lease agreement executed by the City with the organization rather than a contract. For another organization, a contract was not used.

City-owned building leased to the EO1. Our examination disclosed deficiencies in the City monitoring of these donations as:

- The terms of the lease agreement provided that the EO1 was responsible for repairs to the City-owned building. Notwithstanding that provision, in February 2015, the City Council approved a motion presented by a City Council member,<sup>17</sup> who was also the President of the EO1 at the time, to donate \$15,000 to the EO1 based on the understanding that an individual pledged \$15,000 for roof repairs contingent upon the City matching that amount.

In March 2015, the then Director of Management Services<sup>18</sup> directed the then Facilities Operations Manager<sup>19</sup> to assess the overall condition of the City-owned building, inspect the roof, consult with a roofing contractor, and obtain an estimate for roof repairs. The Facilities Operations Manager estimated the cost of the roof repair to be \$25,000. Based on e-mail communications between the City Clerk, City Attorney, and Director of Management Services, during the months of February through April 2015, the City initially intended to manage and oversee the roof repairs. Specifically, the e-mail communications indicated that the City Clerk and Director of Management Services intended for a City contract to be executed with the EO1 regarding the use of the donated funds, and that the City would contract with a roofing contractor,<sup>20</sup> monitor the project, inspect the roof repairs, and, if satisfactory, approve the project completion.

However, the EO1, rather than the City, hired the roofing contractor and scheduled work to begin in April 2015, 1 week after the Director of Management Services reported on the overall condition of the City-owned building to the then City Manager<sup>21</sup> and discussed strategies for City personnel managing the repairs. According to City personnel, the City went along with the EO1 hiring the roofing contractor and assuming project management duties since the EO1's lease agreement provided that the EO1 was responsible for repairs. Because the EO1 contracted with the roofing contractor directly, the City's competitive procurement requirements were not applicable and the City's ability to oversee and control the roofing repair project was diminished, possibly contributing to the other deficiencies and discrepancies we noted.

- In August 2015 and January 2016, EO1 personnel submitted two unpaid roofing contractor invoices totaling \$30,600 to the City (a May 26, 2015, invoice for \$15,800 and a December 9, 2015, invoice for \$14,800). The City paid the EO1 \$7,900 in September 2015 (the City's 50 percent share of the \$15,800 invoice) and \$7,100 in January 2016 (the remaining portion of the City Council-approved \$15,000 donation). Our review of City records and discussions with City personnel disclosed that although City personnel inspected the roof repairs on May 7, 2015, (19 days prior to the invoice date) City records did not demonstrate whether the inspection included the work billed on the May 26, 2015, invoice, and City records did not evidence that City personnel inspected the work billed on the December 9, 2015, invoice. In response to our inquiries, City personnel confirmed that they did not verify whether inspections had taken place

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<sup>17</sup> This individual served on the City Council from November 2012 to November 2018. In August 2017, the City Council member was notified of a complaint filed with the Commission on Ethics (COE) for several alleged violations of State law, including Section 112.313(3), Florida Statutes, by serving concurrently as a City Council member and EO1 President when the City donation for the roof repair was approved. The COE determined that the complaint was legally sufficient and ordered a preliminary investigation. Based on the investigation, in April 2018 the Advocate to the COE recommended that the COE find probable cause to believe that the then City Council member violated Sections 112.313(3) and 112.313(7)(a), Florida Statutes. In June 2018, the COE voted to dismiss the complaint because the COE decided that the public interest would not be served by further proceedings due to: (1) the close, longstanding relationship between the City and the EO1; (2) steps the City Council member took toward remedying any conflict due to her public and private positions and the relationship between the City and the EO1; and (3) the City Council member's reliance on the advice of the then City Counsel.

<sup>18</sup> This individual separated from City employment as Director of Management Services on May 31, 2018.

<sup>19</sup> This individual separated from City employment as Facilities Operations Manager on March 7, 2016.

<sup>20</sup> The City's Purchasing Manual requires formal bid solicitations for contracts with estimated total expenditures exceeding \$25,000; consequently, the City would have been required to solicit bids had it directly procured the roofing contractor services.

<sup>21</sup> This individual separated from City employment as City Manager on November 30, 2018.

prior to paying the EO1. Inspecting and documenting the status of work performed prior to payment is essential to demonstrate that the work was of acceptable quality and satisfactorily completed.

- Our review of canceled checks obtained from the EO1 disclosed that the EO1 paid the roofing contractor subsequent to each of the City's donation payments. Specifically, the EO1 paid the roofing contractor \$15,800 in September 2015 and \$14,000 in March 2016. A Brevard County Sheriff's Office (Sheriff's Office) investigation found that the \$14,000 paid to the roofing contractor in March 2016 differed from the \$14,800 amount on the roofing contractor's December 2015 invoice as a result of the roofing contractor leaving a business card and note on the door of the EO1 requesting payment of \$14,000. Without a written agreement documenting both parties' understanding as to payment terms, discrepancies in payment amounts occurred.
- In a letter dated March 24, 2017, the then Executive Director<sup>22</sup> of the EO1 wrote to the City that it had come to his attention that the roof repair costs were being questioned; however, he did not indicate who was questioning the costs. On March 27, 2017, a City Council member, who is also a Florida-licensed roofing contractor, inspected the roof repairs and identified substandard and incomplete repairs (i.e., peeling paint, broken tiles, and flashing<sup>23</sup> not installed at all required locations) and prepared an inspection report dated May 9, 2017.<sup>24</sup> The City Council member brought the issues to the attention of the City Manager and City Attorney, who referred the issues to the City Code Compliance Division. According to the City Council member's inspection report, the roofing contractor had not applied for a building permit before the work was done or prior to being paid. Subsequent to the inspection, but before the report was issued, the roofing contractor filed an application for a permit listing the value of the repairs at \$14,800, or \$15,800 less than the \$30,600 the roofing contractor invoiced and \$15,000 less than the \$29,800 actually paid by the EO1. According to City Code Compliance personnel, although they verbally asked the roofing contractor why he listed the value of repairs on his application as \$14,800 but invoiced the EO1 \$30,600, the roofing contractor did not respond.

In May 2017, an anonymous individual contacted the Sheriff's Office to report that potential fraud may have occurred involving the roof repair. The Sheriff's Office performed an investigation and, in March 2018, charged the EO1 Executive Director at the time of the roof repairs with several crimes related to fraud, including intercepting a \$7,000 payment from the roofing contractor that was intended for the EO1.<sup>25</sup> The roofing contractor was not charged with a crime and the City and roofing contractor signed a settlement agreement in April 2018 by which the City agreed not to pursue civil remedies against the roofing contractor in exchange for return of \$7,000 to the City, representing a portion of the \$15,000 City donation for the roof repairs. Pursuant to the agreement, the roofing contractor paid the \$7,000 to the City on April 9, 2018.

Subsequent to our inquiries, the City established a policy<sup>26</sup> in October 2019 requiring any repairs or maintenance to City property leased by an external organization and funded by City donations to be coordinated, procured, and managed by the City Department of Management Services' Facilities Management Division.<sup>27</sup> The policy also requires donation-funded work on City property to be overseen

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<sup>22</sup> This individual served as EO1 Executive Director subsequent to the individual who served as EO1 Executive Director at the time of the roof repairs.

<sup>23</sup> Roof flashing is a thin material, usually galvanized steel, that professional roofers use to direct water away from critical areas of the roof, for example, where the roof plane meets a vertical surface like a wall, or around vents, chimneys, or skylights.

<sup>24</sup> *EO1 Roof Issue Summary Report dated May 9, 2017.*

<sup>25</sup> As of December 2020, the case was not yet resolved.

<sup>26</sup> City of Melbourne Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual, *Repairs, Maintenance or Improvements to City Property by Outside Parties.*

<sup>27</sup> City of Melbourne Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual, *Purchasing Manual.*

by a City-employed project manager, who shall coordinate with the Facilities Management Division to ensure that all City policies and procedures and building codes are followed.

**Recommendation:** To ensure that City-donated funds to external organizations are used for the intended public purposes, the City should:

- Execute agreements with external organizations requiring those organizations to submit, as part of their annual report, documentation showing how the donated funds were expended to accomplish the intended public purpose of the donations.
- Periodically examine records maintained by the external organizations to verify that reports and documentation provided to the City are supported by organization records.
- Adhere to the October 2019 policy that requires all repair, maintenance, and improvement projects for City property leased to external organizations and funded by City donations to be coordinated, procured, and managed by the City Facilities Management Division in accordance with applicable City policies and procedures and building codes.

### **Finding 3: City-Owned Properties**

Periodically determining the fair market lease value of City-owned properties leased to external organizations for nominal amounts, or awarded through operation and use agreements with no lease payments, allows the City Council and members of the public to compare that value to the value of the public services provided by the organizations using that property. Such information is essential to the City Council in determining the best use of City-owned property.

As of March 2019, the City leased City-owned properties to 10 external organizations for nominal amounts, ranging from \$1 to \$500 annually, as provided by the associated lease agreements. The City also provided use of City-owned property to another external organization without payment through an operation and use agreement. The City established the free or nominal lease rates for the 11 external organizations in consideration of the public purposes served, and the City Council approved the leases and operation and use agreement. The organizations leasing and using the properties included, for example, the Girl Scouts of Citrus Council, Disabled American Veterans, and the Melbourne Municipal Band. In these instances, the City largely donated the fair market lease value of the properties to the organizations.

Although we requested, City records were not provided, as of October 2019, to demonstrate periodic determinations of the fair market lease value of the properties leased to external organizations. Upon further inquiry, City personnel acknowledged that policies and procedures had not been established to require the documented determinations and that the City Council had approved the leases without such determinations. Consequently, the City Council is limited in its ability to make informed decisions regarding whether the best use of City-owned property is accomplished through the leases or operation and use agreements.

**Recommendation:** To assist the City Council in deciding the best use of City-owned property, the City should periodically determine the fair market lease values of City-owned properties leased to or used by external organizations to determine whether those values are comparable to the value of public services provided by the organizations using the property.

## Finding 4: Land Acquisition Options

The City is responsible for establishing adequate controls relating to land acquisitions. City ordinances<sup>28</sup> provide that the City can acquire real property pursuant to terms and conditions deemed most advantageous to the City; however, as of November 2020, effective policies and procedures had not been established to ensure and document appropriate support for acquisition considerations, such as legal guidance, consultant reports, land appraisals, and negotiation efforts, and selection of the most cost-effective or advantageous option.

In January 2013, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection issued the Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) for the Indian River Lagoon Basin - North Indian River Lagoon (Lagoon). Over 15 years, the BMAP required the City to reduce the amount of nitrogen flowing into the Lagoon per year by 44,923 pounds, with reductions to be made in three 5-year BMAP periods.<sup>29</sup> To help achieve the mandated reduction, in April 2016 the City acquired the Sherwood Park Pond (Sherwood) property for \$315,000 to construct a stormwater retention pond for the purpose of removing contaminants from stormwater before discharge into the Lagoon. Our review of City records and discussions with City personnel disclosed that City records did not demonstrate that the process used to acquire the Sherwood property was prudent and appropriate, that the City Council was provided complete and accurate information necessary to make an informed decision regarding the acquisition, or that the acquisition was the most cost-effective or advantageous option for the City.

In early 2013, the City first considered acquiring the Sherwood property, which was jointly owned by an individual and a limited liability company (LLC), of which the Mayor's husband was one of the three LLC members. Consequently, on June 25, 2013, the then City Engineer<sup>30</sup> consulted with the then City Attorney<sup>31</sup> regarding any conflict-of-interest concerns associated with the City's potential property acquisition. The City Attorney advised on June 26, 2013, that there would potentially be a conflict of interest based on State law<sup>32</sup> and, if the City Council were to vote on the acquisition, State law<sup>33</sup> provides that the Mayor would need to declare a conflict of interest and abstain from voting. The City Attorney also cited a Commission on Ethics (COE) opinion,<sup>34</sup> which refers to an exemption to State law regarding

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<sup>28</sup> Section 2-633, City of Melbourne Code of Ordinances.

<sup>29</sup> The full nitrogen reductions of 44,923 pounds per year may not ultimately be required because the health of the Lagoon is periodically measured based on compliance with the seagrass depth limit targets and once these targets are achieved, additional nutrient reductions are not required.

<sup>30</sup> This individual transitioned from the City Engineer position to the Deputy City Manager position on February 25, 2019.

<sup>31</sup> This individual separated from City employment as City Attorney on November 30, 2014.

<sup>32</sup> Section 112.313(3), Florida Statutes, provides that no employee of an agency acting in his or her official capacity as a public officer acting in his or her official capacity, shall either directly or indirectly purchase, rent, or lease any realty, goods, or services for his or her own agency from any business entity of which the officer's spouse is an officer, partner, director, or proprietor or in which such officer's spouse has a material interest.

<sup>33</sup> Section 112.3143(3)(a), Florida Statutes, provides that no county, municipal, or other local public officer shall vote in an official capacity upon any measure which he or she knows would inure to the special private gain or loss of a relative of the public officer. Such public officer shall, prior to the vote being taken, publicly state to the assembly the nature of the officer's interest in the matter from which he or she is abstaining from voting and, within 15 days after the vote occurs, disclose the nature of his or her interest as a public record in a memorandum filed with the person responsible for recording the minutes of the meeting, who shall incorporate the memorandum in the minutes.

<sup>34</sup> Commission on Ethics Opinion No. 06-28 refers to the "sole source" exemption as provided in Section 112.313(12)(e), Florida Statutes.

conflicts of interest for sole source purchases and recommended contacting the COE for clarification before contracting to acquire the Sherwood property. However, the City did not contact the COE for clarification and, in response to our inquiries, City personnel indicated that they did not know why the City did not act on the City Attorney's recommendation to request COE clarification.

Prior to receiving the BMAP for the Lagoon, the City hired a consultant to assist in the improvement of stormwater management within the City. The consultant reviewed all vacant properties along drainage ways to identify potential treatment sites and discussed the sites with a City engineering supervisor and the then City Engineer during Stormwater Quality Master Plan (Master Plan) development meetings. In November 2013, the consultant completed the Master Plan, which included options for improving stormwater management within or proximate to the City. The Master Plan also included a project priority matrix that ranked 46 potential projects, with the most effective and economically efficient projects receiving the highest rankings.

According to City personnel, to more quickly reach the goal of reducing the amount of nitrogen flow by 44,923 pounds per year, and to best use the City's stormwater utility resources, the City Engineer and engineering supervisor decided to first focus on projects that could provide total nitrogen treatment efficiency (cost per pound)<sup>35</sup> less than \$1,750. According to the Master Plan, only two properties, the Harbor City Boulevard Treatment Train (Harbor City) and the Sherwood property, ranked 4th and 14th in efficiency, respectively, provided total nitrogen removal of at least 1,000 pounds per year with a total nitrogen treatment efficiency of less than \$1,750.

As the Harbor City property was ranked higher, we inquired of City personnel about any consideration given to acquiring that property. City personnel indicated there had been communications between City personnel and the property owner's representative, but the City had been unsuccessful in attempts to acquire the property. City records indicated that the City obtained appraisals valuing the property at \$690,000 and \$845,000 in March 2013 and March 2014, respectively, and the property owner had obtained an appraisal value of \$1 million in June 2013. City records also evidenced that the City expressed interest in acquiring the property; however, City records provided to us did not evidence price negotiations, City price offers on the property, or counter offers from the property owner.

In September 2014, the City Director of Management Services informed the Harbor City property owner's representative that the City had no further interest in the property at that time but that the City would like to "keep the door open for further conversations." Seventeen months later, on February 15, 2016, the property owner sold the property to another party. Had the City chosen to pursue the Harbor City property and acquired it for \$1 million, the estimated total nitrogen treatment efficiency would have been \$1,393,<sup>36</sup> which would have been \$83 less (i.e., more efficient) than the \$1,476<sup>37</sup> estimated total nitrogen treatment

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<sup>35</sup> According to the Master Plan, "Nutrient treatment efficiency (cost per pound) is calculated by dividing the total project implementation costs by the annual nutrient treatment mass provided by the project. Lower cost per pound of nutrient treatment is more desirable (High Efficiency)."

<sup>36</sup> Using an adjusted estimated total project cost of \$2,065,600, representing the estimated total project cost of \$1,065,600 plus the potential purchase price of \$1,000,000, divided by an annual total nitrogen removal mass of 1,483 pounds per year the total nitrogen treatment efficiency (cost per pound) would be \$1,393.

<sup>37</sup> Using an adjusted estimated total project cost of \$2,031,000, representing the estimated total project cost of \$1,716,000 plus the purchase price of \$315,000, divided by an annual total nitrogen removal mass of 1,376 pounds, the total nitrogen treatment efficiency (cost per pound) would be \$1,476.

efficiency for the Sherwood property project based on the \$315,000 acquisition cost. Further, the City may have been able to achieve an even lower total nitrogen removal cost for the Harbor City property had it attempted to negotiate a lower price.

As previously mentioned, the City acquired the Sherwood property in April 2016. According to a handwritten note<sup>38</sup> attached to a Brevard County Property Appraiser “Property Details” report dated October 2014 from a City engineering supervisor to the then City Engineer, one of the Sherwood property owners “stopped by and said he thought the City may be interested in purchasing his property for stormwater” and that “he’d like to sell it to us (for the right price).” Subsequently, the City obtained three appraisals of the Sherwood property, with the two highest appraisal values being \$270,000 and \$288,000.

On August 14, 2015, the City Attorney<sup>39</sup> advised that the City could acquire the Sherwood property provided that a determination was made by City personnel that the property was uniquely situated to address City stormwater needs (i.e., the property would qualify for a sole source exemption provided in State law).<sup>40</sup> To demonstrate that the property was uniquely situated to address City stormwater needs, on August 27, 2015, a City engineering supervisor prepared a memorandum titled, “*Sole Source Justification for Sherwood Park Water Quality Project, Project No. 20113*,” and provided it to the City Engineer. According to the memorandum, the Sherwood property was considered a sole source as it was the only parcel of land located in the “drainage basin”<sup>41</sup> that could provide total nitrogen removal of over 1,000 pounds per year. However, as the Master Plan identified multiple properties in drainage basins that could be used to help satisfy the City’s pollutant reduction requirements, it is not apparent why City personnel decided to utilize a 1,000 pound per year criterion, limit the City’s land acquisition options to a specific basin, and conclude that the City could acquire the Sherwood property based on the sole source exemption. Although we requested, City personnel did not provide an explanation as to why the land acquisition option was limited to the specific basin.

On September 23, 2015, the City submitted an acquisition offer of \$288,000 for the Sherwood property, based on the highest appraisal obtained, to which the property owners submitted a counteroffer of \$335,000. On October 26, 2015, the City submitted a counteroffer of \$315,000 and the property owners accepted.

In response to our inquiry, City personnel indicated that it was their recollection, but there were no records to support, that the property owners obtained an appraisal on the property indicating a value “in the mid-\$300,000 range” and showed a copy of the appraisal to someone in the City Engineering Department. However, the property owners were not willing to provide City personnel a copy of the appraisal. Given the importance of this appraisal in assessing an appropriate price to pay for the property, it is not apparent why the property owners would not provide a copy of the appraisal or why City personnel did not document efforts to obtain a copy. Treating this land acquisition as a sole source purchase may have placed the City in a weaker bargaining position and contributed to the City’s inability to obtain a

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<sup>38</sup> City personnel provided us the handwritten note in July 2019.

<sup>39</sup> This individual began employment as City Attorney on December 11, 2014.

<sup>40</sup> Section 112.313(12)(e), Florida Statutes.

<sup>41</sup> According to City personnel, the term “drainage basin” as used in the memorandum referred to the area that drains to the open conveyance system, to which the Sherwood property drains, and is connected to the Lagoon.

documented appraisal from the property owners and, ultimately, paying an acquisition price that was \$27,000 more than the highest documented appraised value.

The then City Manager placed the Sherwood property acquisition as an action item on the January 26, 2016, Council meeting agenda. A memorandum from a City engineering supervisor through the City Engineer titled *Purchase of Property for the Sherwood Park Water Quality Project, Project No. 20113* (purchase memorandum) was presented to the City Council as part of the meeting agenda. We noted:

- Although the purchase memorandum indicated that “the location of the property makes the property unique in meeting the City’s stormwater quality treatment needs,” the City Council was not provided the aforementioned memorandum describing the basis for concluding that the Sherwood property was a sole source purchase, and City personnel’s decision to limit the land acquisition option to a specific basin was not otherwise communicated to the City Council.
- An audio recording of the January 26, 2016, Council meeting disclosed:
  - The City Engineer indicated that there were only “a few sites” that could provide the benefit of removing 1,000 pounds of nitrogen per year; however, information from the entire Master Plan was not presented to the City Council for consideration and the City Council was not otherwise informed that the consultant identified other properties that could have been purchased to help achieve a reduced amount of nitrogen flow. According to City personnel, it had not been past practice to present stormwater, water distribution, water production, wastewater collection, water reclamation facility, and reclaimed water distribution plans to the City Council.
  - A City Council member asked the City Engineer why City personnel proposed paying \$27,000 more than the highest appraised value. In response, the City Engineer indicated that the City had its appraised value, the property owners had their appraised value, and the City negotiated from that point. However, the City Council was not advised that the City did not have a documented appraisal from the property owners or that the owners declined to provide the City a copy.
  - A City Council member asked the City Engineer if any other areas or locations were considered. In response, the City Engineer referred to the City’s previous interest in acquiring the Harbor City property, indicating that property would have provided close to the amount of total nitrogen removal offered by the Sherwood property. The City Engineer further indicated that City personnel were unable to come to an agreement with the Harbor City property owner and that the owner wanted over \$1 million. However, as previously noted, City records did not evidence purchase negotiations for the Harbor City property, which offered potentially more pounds of total nitrogen removal per year at a lower per pound removal costs than provided by the Sherwood property.

Relying upon the purchase memorandum and the City Engineer’s statements, the City Council, with the Mayor abstaining as provided by State law,<sup>42</sup> approved acquiring the Sherwood property for \$315,000.

Because of the City Engineer’s statements and because other properties identified in the consultant study were not provided to the City Council for consideration, the City Council did not have complete and accurate information necessary to make an informed decision regarding the Sherwood property acquisition. As such, the City may not have acquired the property offering the most effective and efficient pollution removal option at the most economical cost to the City, contrary to City ordinances, which

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<sup>42</sup> Section 112.3143(3)(a), Florida Statutes.

require the City to acquire real property pursuant to terms and conditions deemed most advantageous to the City.

**Recommendation:** The City should establish land acquisition policies and procedures that:

- **Require the City Council to solicit guidance, before and during the land acquisitions, from the City Attorney and document consideration of and necessary action based on that guidance.**
- **Ensure that the City Council is provided complete and accurate information, including relevant consultant reports, prior to land acquisitions.**
- **Require City personnel to obtain all significant information, including seller-obtained land appraisals, and document all land acquisition negotiation efforts.**

### **Finding 5: Land Acquisition Contracts**

Effective land acquisition controls include policies and procedures that require, before taking title to real property, the conduct of due diligence to determine the existence of any potential air, water, or soil contamination. Among other things, such policies and procedures should require:

- Appropriate inquiries into the previous ownership and use of the land consistent with good commercial or customary practice, including contact with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), or conduct of a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA)<sup>43</sup> to determine the existence of any potential contamination that may exist on or adjacent to the land.
- If there is any evidence of a discharge of pollutants or hazardous substances on, or adjacent to, land being considered for acquisition, the conduct of further investigation using a Phase II ESA.<sup>44</sup>
- City management and those charged with governance be informed about any contamination concerns identified through the inquiries or ESAs.
- Contracts for the acquisition of land establish the seller and buyer's responsibilities for remediating any air, water, or soil contaminations and not be amended or waived without City Council approval.

As of November 2020, the City had not established effective land acquisition policies and procedures. As discussed in Finding 4, the City acquired the Sherwood property in April 2016 for \$315,000 to build a stormwater retention pond. The land acquisition contract allowed the City 75 days (feasibility period) from the January 26, 2016, effective date of the contract,<sup>45</sup> to verify the soil conditions, existence of adverse environmental conditions or hazardous substances on or under the property, and the suitability of the property for use for stormwater retention purposes. The City contracted with an environmental firm to perform a Phase I ESA to determine potential sources of contamination to the land and received the results on March 24, 2016. The firm's Phase I ESA report indicated that there was potential contamination in the property's soil and groundwater due to past property uses and a railroad track along

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<sup>43</sup> The objective of a Phase 1 ESA is to identify conditions indicative of releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances on, at, in, or to the subject property through a review of the site history and site reconnaissance. In addition, a Phase 1 ESA includes examination of United States Environmental Protection Agency and Florida Department of Environmental Protection records and inquiry of the property owner regarding knowledge of any pollutants.

<sup>44</sup> A Phase II ESA involves near-surface soil and groundwater testing for indicators of actual contamination resulting from the potential sources of contamination identified in the Phase I ESA.

<sup>45</sup> Pursuant to the land acquisition contract, the effective date is the date the City Council approved the contract.

one of the property borders. The environmental firm recommended that a Phase II ESA be performed to explore the extent of the potential adverse environmental conditions.

In an e-mail dated March 29, 2016, the City Attorney referenced verbal conversations with the then City Engineer and notified the Sherwood property closing attorney that the City was waiving the remaining portion of the feasibility period, and wanted to close on the property in April 2016. Our examination of records and discussions with City personnel disclosed that, prior to closing on the property on April 13, 2016, City personnel did not inform the City Council that the Phase I ESA disclosed environmental conditions that could potentially result in additional project costs to prepare the property for its intended use. In response to our inquiry, City personnel indicated that Engineering Department personnel discussed the Phase I ESA results amongst themselves and with consultants, including the environmental firm that performed the ESA testing, and the consultants advised that the costs of remediation efforts to remove contaminated soil were projected to be minor. Notwithstanding this response, the discussions were verbal and not documented, and it is not apparent how it was determined that the remediation cost estimate would be minor since the City did not obtain an estimate of the amount of contaminated soil that would need to be excavated and removed until June 2020.

Subsequent to the land purchase, the environmental firm performed a Phase II ESA for \$5,800, and the City received the ESA results on May 9, 2016. The results disclosed arsenic contamination levels exceeding the DEP's groundwater and soil cleanup target levels in two of the four groundwater samples and one of the four soil samples. The firm performed additional testing in October 2016 at a cost to the City of \$14,375 and discussed the results with DEP representatives and City personnel in January 2017. Based on those discussions, the DEP representatives determined that any soil with elevated arsenic levels must be excavated and disposed of in a facility permitted by the DEP to treat, store, or dispose of hazardous waste. No remediation efforts were required for the contaminated groundwater.

In response to our inquiries as to why the City waived the remaining portion of the feasibility period and closed on the property prior to receiving the results of the Phase II ESA, City personnel indicated that it was determined that the project was still viable for a stormwater retention pond because the soil would need to be removed from the site regardless of any contamination. Notwithstanding, according to City records documenting ESA consultant discussions with DEP representatives, contaminated soil must be disposed at a permitted facility, which is more costly than disposing uncontaminated soil.

At the time of our initial inquiry in November 2019, City personnel did not provide an estimate of the additional costs associated with disposal of the contaminated soil at a permitted facility because the cost of disposal varies based on the volume of soil disposed, and the volume of soil removed would not be known until the site was excavated. Subsequently, in May 2020, City personnel determined that it would be more prudent to test soil both prior to excavation and during excavation and directed the environmental firm to perform soil contamination testing at a total contracted cost not to exceed \$13,900. On June 29, 2020, based on the preliminary results of the pre-excavation testing, the firm informed the City that an estimated 1,217 cubic yards of contaminated soil would need to be removed. Our inquiry with City personnel and review of City records disclosed that the expected net costs attributable to disposal of the contaminated soil was \$46,246. As of October 2020, the soil contamination testing had been partially completed and \$6,255 had been paid to the environmental firm. In total, subsequent to the March 24, 2016, Phase I ESA identification of potential contamination, the City expended \$26,430 for the

Phase II ESA and additional testing, \$46,246 to dispose of contaminated soil, and anticipates spending another \$7,645 for remaining testing, for a total expected cost of \$80,321.

Absent effective land acquisition contracting policies and procedures, there is an increased risk that the City will acquire land that either cannot be used for City-intended purposes or requires significant remediation costs. Additionally, absent such policies and procedures, the City Council may lack sufficient information to make informed decisions regarding land acquisitions.

**Recommendation:** The City should establish policies and procedures that require, before taking title to land, documented inquiries with previous owners and the DEP about potential contamination on or adjacent to proposed site acquisitions, the conduct of ESAs, and communication of identified concerns to City management and the City Council. Such policies and procedures should also require that land acquisition contracts establish the seller and buyer's responsibilities for remediating any air, water, or soil contaminations and that the terms of the contracts not be amended or waived without City Council approval.

#### **Finding 6: City Salary and Benefit Costs Charged to Community Redevelopment Agencies**

State law<sup>46</sup> provides that community redevelopment agencies (CRAs) may expend moneys in their redevelopment trust fund for administrative and overhead expenses necessary or incidental to the implementation of a community redevelopment plan. Additionally, Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Best Practices<sup>47</sup> recommend that, when allocating indirect costs, such as shared administrative expenses, a systematic and rational methodology be used in the calculation of the amounts allocated.

Because the Melbourne Community Redevelopment Agency (Downtown CRA)<sup>48</sup> and Olde Eau Gallie Riverfront CRA (Riverfront CRA) do not have employees, City personnel perform CRA functions. For example, City personnel provide the CRAs with maintenance services; law enforcement services; and administrative services, such as developing CRA annual budgets, administering CRA programs, preparing and filing annual CRA reports, and managing CRA projects. The City recovers these costs from the CRAs by charging the CRAs a percentage of the salary and benefit costs of the City employees who perform CRA duties.

During the period October 2017 through March 2019, the City charged \$312,244 to the Downtown CRA, and \$102,411 to the Riverfront CRA for allocated City employee salary and benefit costs. To evaluate whether these costs were determined using a systematic and rational methodology, we examined City records and asked City personnel how the allocation percentages were determined and how often the percentages were adjusted for any changes in the services provided. Our audit procedures disclosed that:

- According to the City Manager, the City Parks and Recreation Department Director allocated 75 percent of the salary and benefits of two Maintenance Worker I positions to the Downtown CRA and 100 percent of a Maintenance Worker I position to the Riverfront CRA based upon an estimate of the hours needed to maintain each CRA's resources. The City Manager also indicated

<sup>46</sup> Section 163.387(6)(c)1., Florida Statutes.

<sup>47</sup> GFOA Best Practice: *Indirect Cost Allocation*, February 2014.

<sup>48</sup> City personnel refer to the Melbourne CRA as the Downtown CRA to distinguish it from the City's other two CRAs (i.e., the Olde Eau Gallie Riverfront CRA and Babcock Street CRA).

that the City does not charge the CRAs for any salary and benefits costs associated with City Parks and Recreation Department supervisory personnel, although those personnel perform administrative functions for the CRAs.

- The City charged 100 percent of the salary and benefits of a police officer stationed within the Downtown CRA.
- The salary and benefit costs for City Community Development Department personnel were charged to the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA using the allocation percentages shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Allocation of City Community Development Department**  
**Salaries and Benefits by Position and CRA**  
**During the period October 2017 through March 2019**

Position	Downtown CRA	Riverfront CRA
Community Development Director	10 percent	5 percent
Economic Development Manager	25 percent	15 percent
Planner	35 percent	15 percent
Administrative Assistant	25 percent	25 percent

Source: City records.

According to the City Manager, the Community Development Department personnel allocation percentages were estimated conservatively to save costs for the overall administration, management, and compliance efforts of the CRAs, and included activities such as developing the CRAs’ annual budgets, complying with the CRAs’ Web site transparency requirements, and administering the CRAs’ grant programs. Notwithstanding, although we requested, a cost allocation plan or other records, such as records evidencing City employee time and effort spent on CRA activities, were not provided to demonstrate how the percentages were determined. Additionally, in response to our inquiry regarding how often City personnel review and adjust the allocation percentages used to charge City personnel salary and benefit costs to the CRAs, the City Manager responded that, “management has periodically reviewed and concluded that the CRAs have not been overcharged, since utilizing percentages of employees with a particular area of expertise was less expensive than hiring dedicated [full-time] CRA administrators.” However, no records were provided to us evidencing that periodic reviews were conducted, the allocated costs were reasonable, or the allocation percentages were periodically adjusted for any changes in the services provided.

Absent a documented systematic and rational basis for allocating administrative and maintenance costs to the CRAs, the City cannot demonstrate that employee salaries and benefits allocated to the CRAs are commensurate with the actual time and effort spent by those employees on CRA activities.

**Recommendation: The City should develop a reasonable and systematic cost allocation methodology to support the salary and benefit costs charged to the CRAs and periodically adjust the charges allocated as necessary to reflect the actual cost of City services provided to the CRAs.**

**Finding 7: CRA Policies and Procedures**

Given the significant public resources received and expended by the Downtown CRA and the Riverfront CRA, it is incumbent on the City and CRAs to ensure that the CRAs establish policies and procedures to promote the safeguarding of CRA resources, including the effective, efficient, and appropriate use of those resources in accordance with applicable State and local laws.

Consistent with State law,<sup>49</sup> the CRAs are required to procure goods and services in accordance with City ordinances.<sup>50</sup> However, although we requested, as of September 2020 City personnel had not provided records evidencing that the CRA Boards had established policies and procedures governing the various other aspects (e.g., budgets, investments, revenue processing, disbursement processing) of the CRAs' operations.

City personnel indicated that they believe the CRAs are part of the City and are thereby required to comply with City policies and procedures; consequently, the CRAs have always followed City policies and procedures. However, because the CRAs are separate legal entities established pursuant to State law,<sup>51</sup> specific action by the CRA Boards is required to make City policies and procedures applicable to the CRAs. Additionally, as special districts, CRAs are subject to State laws<sup>52</sup> that include provisions that do not apply to municipalities and may not be addressed by City policies and procedures. Conversely, certain City policies and procedures based on State laws applicable to municipalities may not apply to CRAs.

Established policies and procedures addressing the various aspects of CRA operations would provide additional assurance that the CRAs conduct business in an effective, efficient, and appropriate manner consistent with CRA Board intent and the CRAs' approved Plans.

**Recommendation: The Downtown CRA Board and Riverfront CRA Board should establish policies and procedures governing all aspects of CRA operations. Such policies and procedures should be developed, as appropriate, based on State law specifically applicable to CRAs and generally applicable to special districts.**

**Finding 8: CRA Board Meeting Notices**

State law<sup>53</sup> requires the governing body of each special district, including CRAs, to file quarterly, semiannually, or annually, a schedule of its regular meetings with the local governing authority. The schedule is to include the date, time, and location of each scheduled meeting and shall be published in a newspaper of general paid circulation.

<sup>49</sup> Section 163.370(5), Florida Statutes.

<sup>50</sup> Chapter 2, Article VI, City of Melbourne Code of Ordinances.

<sup>51</sup> Section 163.356, Florida Statutes.

<sup>52</sup> For example, Chapter 163, Part III, and Chapter 189, Florida Statutes.

<sup>53</sup> Section 189.015(1), Florida Statutes.

According to City personnel, the City complies with the statutory CRA public meeting notice requirements by annually publishing in a newspaper a schedule of City Council meetings accompanied by a statement that the City Council serves as the governing body for each CRA and, therefore, the meeting schedule for the CRAs “mirrors the City Council meeting schedule.” Notwithstanding the City statement published in the newspaper, the CRA Boards do not conduct business at every City Council meeting and, consequently, the meeting schedule did not sufficiently communicate when CRA Board meetings would be held. The schedule of meetings the City published for the 2018 calendar year included 23 City Council meetings and during only 8 of those meetings did the Downtown CRA Board, the Riverfront CRA Board, or both CRA Boards meet.<sup>54</sup>

Accordingly, the annual published notice did not provide proper public notice of the CRA Board meetings and parties interested in attending the CRA Board meetings, but not the City Council meetings, were not adequately informed of the date and time of each CRA Board meeting.

**Recommendation: To provide appropriate notice of CRA Board meetings to interested parties, the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA should comply with State law by publishing in a newspaper of general paid circulation meeting schedules that include the date, time, and location of each scheduled CRA Board meeting.**

#### **Finding 9: CRA Plans**

Pursuant to State law,<sup>55</sup> CRAs must expend tax increment financing money in accordance with an approved CRA Plan, which must include information prescribed by State law.<sup>56</sup> For example, CRA Plans must:

- Contain a legal description of the boundaries of the CRA and the reasons for establishing such boundaries.
- Identify any publicly funded capital projects to be undertaken within the community redevelopment area.
- Contain a detailed statement of the projected costs of the redevelopment, including the amount to be expended on publicly funded capital projects in the community redevelopment area.

We examined the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA Plans in effect during the period October 2017 through March 2019 to determine whether the Plans included the information prescribed by State law and provided for the Downtown and Riverfront CRAs’ expenditures during the same period. We found that the Downtown CRA Plan included all of the statutorily required information; however, although the Riverfront CRA Plan included information about planned goals and objectives for redevelopment and proposed capital improvements, the Plan did not include up-to-date specific identification of publicly funded capital projects to be undertaken<sup>57</sup> or detailed statements of the projected costs of

<sup>54</sup> Both the Downtown CRA and the Riverfront CRA Boards met on September 11, September 25, and November 27, 2018. In addition to those dates, the Downtown CRA Board met on February 13, July 10, August 14, and October 9, 2018; and the Riverfront CRA Board met on June 12, 2018.

<sup>55</sup> Section 163.387(1)(a), Florida Statutes.

<sup>56</sup> Section 163.362, Florida Statutes.

<sup>57</sup> Section 163.362(4), Florida Statutes.

redevelopment.<sup>58</sup> Our examination of the CRA Plans and CRA-project expenditure records disclosed that:

- The Riverfront CRA Plan did not include a cost estimate for the Highland Avenue Lighting Project; rather, the project was included as part of a larger project, the Highland Avenue Streetscape Project, which had an estimated total cost of \$1.4 million according to the Riverfront CRA Plan. During the period October 2017 through March 2019, the Riverfront CRA transferred \$125,000 to the City General Construction Fund, a capital projects fund (as discussed in Finding 11) and incurred \$12,000 in expenditures for the Highland Avenue Lighting Project.

According to City personnel, subsequent to the \$1.4 million cost estimate in May 2001,<sup>59</sup> the entire Highland Avenue Streetscape Project was determined to be financially unfeasible; however, the Highland Avenue Lighting Project component of the Highland Avenue Streetscape Project<sup>60</sup> was continued. Insofar as no revisions were made to the \$1.4 million cost estimate in the CRA Plan, it was not apparent that the Highland Avenue Streetscape Project would not be completed in its entirety or, alternatively, what component(s) of the project were anticipated to be completed. Also, the portion of the \$1.4 million cost estimate attributable to the Highland Avenue Lighting Project was not apparent.

- During the same period, the Riverfront CRA paid:
  - \$82,500 to an external organization for the Main Street America Program to encourage the development of private funding sources for the purchase and installation of streetscape enhancements in the CRA; assist in the implementation of the Facade Improvement Grant Program; and support CRA capital projects and programs through design, review, and facilitation of project information to stakeholders.
  - \$14,739 to lease land for public parking.
  - \$10,000 to provide a grant<sup>61</sup> as part of the Olde Eau Gallie Riverfront Melbourne Facade Improvement Program.

Although the CRA Plan included the Main Street America Program, the acquisition of additional public parking, and Facade Improvement Program loans and grants, the CRA Plan did not provide cost estimates for those activities.

According to City personnel, the Riverfront CRA Plan contains long-range and complex initiatives, for which estimates are “difficult and arbitrary.” Notwithstanding the City’s response, as State law<sup>62</sup> allows CRA plans to be amended or modified when necessary or desirable, it is not apparent why the CRA did not periodically amend the Riverfront CRA Plan to reflect changes in circumstances or as additional information became available.

Including accurate CRA redevelopment activity information, including up-to-date cost estimates, in the CRA plan provides valuable information to the taxing authorities required to contribute to the CRA and to the general public.

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<sup>58</sup> Section 163.362(9), Florida Statutes.

<sup>59</sup> The cost estimate was originally included in the CRA Plan that was adopted by City Ordinance No. 2001-23 on May 22, 2001.

<sup>60</sup> According to the most recent CRA Plan available, dated August 11, 2015, the Highland Avenue Streetscape Project was composed of stormwater retrofitting, on-street parking, sidewalks, landscaping, site furnishings, decorative lighting, decorative paving and crosswalks, and an irrigation system.

<sup>61</sup> The Riverfront CRA paid \$10,000 directly to the grantee, and the City paid an additional \$7,500 to the same grantee from the City’s General Construction Fund using moneys previously transferred from the Riverfront CRA.

<sup>62</sup> Section 163.361(1), Florida Statutes.

**Recommendation: The Riverfront CRA should include detailed estimates of projected redevelopment costs and periodically amend the CRA Plan to reflect changes both in the scope of planned redevelopment activities and in the associated cost estimates.**

## **Finding 10: CRA Budgets**

Pursuant to State law,<sup>63</sup> the Downtown CRA Board and Riverfront CRA Board must each adopt a budget by resolution each fiscal year, and the total amount available from taxation and other sources, including balances brought forward from prior fiscal years, must equal the total appropriations for expenditures and reserves. The adopted budgets must regulate CRA expenditures, and it is unlawful to expend or contract for expenditures in any fiscal year except pursuant to the adopted budgets.

Our examination of records and discussions with City personnel disclosed that the CRA budgetary process could be improved. Specifically, we noted that:

- The Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA Board-adopted budgets for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal years did not include balances brought forward from prior fiscal years as resources available for expenditure in the subsequent fiscal year. Specifically, the Downtown CRA budgets for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal years did not include the prior fiscal year-end balances totaling \$340,999 and \$540,873, respectively, and the Riverfront CRA budgets for those fiscal years did not include the prior fiscal year-end balances totaling \$383,204 and \$529,236, respectively.

The City Council-approved City budget documents for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal years included a Summary of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances Schedule (Summary Schedule) for the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA, which presented summarized budgeted totals for each expenditure category included on the CRA Board-adopted budgets and budgeted beginning and ending fund balances. However:

- The Summary Schedules were not included in the CRA Board-adopted budgets, and the exclusion of beginning fund balance from the CRA Board-adopted Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA budgets for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal years was contrary to State law and did not provide for transparency of all available sources.
- City personnel routinely develop the next fiscal year budget before the current fiscal year ends on September 30, and the budgeted beginning fund balance for the next fiscal year must be estimated. To estimate the budgeted beginning fund balance for the Summary Schedules, the actual ending fund balance from the second preceding fiscal year's audited financial statements was used. For example, for the Summary Schedule for the Downtown CRA's 2017-18 budget, the 2015-16 fiscal year ending balance was used for the budgeted beginning balance. However, under this methodology, budgeted beginning fund balance amounts were significantly understated<sup>64</sup> and City personnel did not attempt to amend the estimated budgeted beginning fund balances to reflect actual balances once the CRAs' accounting records were closed. Without utilizing the most current financial information available to estimate and, as applicable, amend the budgeted beginning fund balances, the usefulness of the budget as a financial management tool is diminished.

<sup>63</sup> Section 189.016(3), Florida Statutes.

<sup>64</sup> Budgeted beginning fund balances of \$209,914 and \$340,999 presented in the Summary Schedules for the Downtown CRA's 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal year budgets were \$131,085 and \$199,874, respectively, less than the actual prior fiscal year ending fund balances. Budgeted beginning fund balances of \$217,417 and \$383,203 presented in the Summary Schedules for the Riverfront CRA's 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal year budgets were \$165,786 and \$146,033, respectively, less than the actual prior fiscal year ending fund balances.

- The Downtown CRA Board and Riverfront CRA Board each approved resolutions<sup>65</sup> adopting budgets for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal years. The adopted budgets presented budgeted expenditures at the object level within specified expenditure categories (e.g., personnel services, operating expenses, debt service). However, the resolutions did not include language specifying the legal level of budgetary control and, as noted in Finding 7, the CRAs had not established policies and procedures governing CRA operations, including CRA budgets. In the absence of a CRA policy establishing a legal level of budgetary control, the established level of control was the level at which budgeted expenditure amounts were presented in the adopted budgets. Although the adopted budgets presented budgeted expenditures at the expenditure category and object level, budgeted expenditures reported for the CRAs in the City’s 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal year audited financial statements for the CRAs were presented at the function level (e.g., general government). As a result, financial statement users could not readily determine whether the CRAs’ resources were expended within budgeted amounts at the expenditure category and object level consistent with CRA Board intent.
- State law<sup>66</sup> requires that the CRAs’ final adopted budgets be posted on the CRAs’ official Web site within 30 days after adoption and must remain on the Web site for at least 2 years. The CRAs do not maintain their own Web sites; rather, the City Web site includes a Web page for each CRA. Our examination of the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA Web pages in August 2020 disclosed that City efforts to promote transparency of the CRAs’ budgets could be improved as:
  - The CRAs’ Web pages included links to the Summary Schedules located under the heading “Budget and Budget Amendments” but did not include a direct link to the CRA Board-adopted budgets.
  - Although it was possible to access the CRA Board-adopted budgets, included within the City Council-adopted City budget documents, from the CRAs’ Web pages by clicking “City of Melbourne’s budget page” links under the heading “General Financial Information,” the links are not conspicuously identified as links to the CRA Board-adopted budgets, and the CRAs’ Web pages do not otherwise inform users of how the CRA budgets may be viewed.

Providing clear instructions on the CRA Web pages on how to access the CRA Board-adopted budgets would facilitate access to those budgets and increase public awareness.

**Recommendation: The Boards of the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA should establish budget policies and procedures for their respective CRAs that:**

- **Ensure that future CRA Board-adopted budgets include all balances brought forward from prior fiscal years as required by State law, and that City personnel estimate and amend the budgeted beginning fund balances to reflect using the most current information available.**
- **Establish the desired legal level of budgetary control for CRA budgets and ensure that budgeted expenditures reported on the financial statements accurately reflect the established legal level of budgetary control to enable financial statement users to readily determine whether resources were expended within budgeted amounts consistent with CRA Board intent.**
- **Ensure that the CRA Web pages clearly inform Web page users how to access the CRA Board-adopted budgets.**

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<sup>65</sup> City of Melbourne Resolution Nos. 3678 and 3782 adopted the Downtown CRA’s 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal year budgets, respectively. City of Melbourne Resolution Nos. 3680 and 3784 adopted the Riverfront CRA’s 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal year budgets, respectively.

<sup>66</sup> Section 189.016(4), Florida Statutes.

## Finding 11: Ending Balances in CRA Trust Funds

State law<sup>67</sup> requires that, on the last day of a CRA's fiscal year, any money remaining in a CRA trust fund after the payment of expenses pursuant to State law shall be either:

- Returned to each taxing authority which paid the increment in the proportion that the amount of the payment of such taxing authority bears to the total amount paid into the trust fund by all taxing authorities for that year.
- Used to reduce the amount of any indebtedness to which increment revenues are pledged.
- Deposited into an escrow account for the purpose of later reducing any indebtedness to which increment revenues are pledged.
- Appropriated to a specific redevelopment project pursuant to an approved community redevelopment plan.

Moneys remaining in the Downtown CRA Trust Fund and Riverfront CRA Trust Fund on the last day of the CRAs' 2016-17 and 2017-18 fiscal years totaled \$724,203 and \$1,070,109, respectively, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Ending Balances in CRA Trust Funds**  
**For the 2016-17 and 2017-18 Fiscal Years**

	2016-17	2017-18
Downtown CRA	\$340,999	\$ 540,873
Riverfront CRA	383,204	529,236
<b>Totals</b>	<b><u>\$724,203</u></b>	<b><u>\$1,070,109</u></b>

Source: City's audited financial statements.

Our review of City records and discussions with City personnel disclosed that City records did not demonstrate that the moneys remaining in the Downtown CRA Trust Fund and Riverfront CRA Trust Fund were appropriated to a specific redevelopment project or otherwise disposed of in accordance with State law. City personnel indicated that the moneys remaining in the Downtown CRA Trust Fund and Riverfront CRA Trust Fund on the last day of the 2016-17 and 2017-18 fiscal years is being used to fund future capital projects listed in the City's 5-year capital improvement plan and is appropriated to specific projects via budget resolutions. However, although projects were listed in the City's 5-year capital improvement plan, City records did not demonstrate that the moneys remaining in the Downtown CRA Trust Fund and Riverfront CRA Trust Fund at the end of the 2016-17 and 2017-18 fiscal years were appropriated to specific redevelopment projects in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal years, respectively.

In response to our inquiry, City personnel indicated that, although there were no specific appropriations for any of the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA projects on the last days of the 2016-17 or 2017-18 fiscal years, any moneys remaining in the CRA Trust Funds at the end of the fiscal year were included in each CRA's respective portion of the City's pooled cash account for the purpose of later reducing any indebtedness to which increment revenues are pledged. However, State law requires that moneys be deposited into an escrow account when remaining funds are to be used for the purpose of

<sup>67</sup> Section 163.387(7), Florida Statutes.

later reducing any indebtedness to which increment revenues are pledged.<sup>68</sup> Insofar as the City's pooled cash account was not an escrow account (i.e., an account restricted to reducing indebtedness to which the CRAs' increment revenues are pledged), City records did not demonstrate that unexpended trust fund moneys were committed to reduction of indebtedness pursuant to State law.

Absent records evidencing that moneys remaining in CRA trust funds at fiscal year-end were re-appropriated to a specific redevelopment project or otherwise disposed of according to State law, there is an increased risk that the taxing authorities that contributed tax financing moneys to the CRAs may not receive unused CRA moneys to which they are entitled pursuant to State law.

**Recommendation: The Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA should maintain records evidencing that moneys remaining in CRA trust funds at the end of the fiscal year were either obligated for purposes authorized by State law or returned to the applicable taxing authorities that contributed tax financing moneys.**

## **Finding 12: CRA Trust Fund Uses**

State law<sup>69</sup> requires CRAs to use a redevelopment trust fund to receive and spend tax increment financing moneys. Funds allocated to and deposited into the trust fund must be used to finance or refinance any community redevelopment undertaken pursuant to the approved redevelopment plan. State law<sup>70</sup> also requires each CRA to provide for an audit, conducted by an independent certified public accountant or firm, of the trust fund<sup>71</sup> each fiscal year. The audit report must describe the amount and sources of deposits into, and the amount and purpose of withdrawals from, the trust fund during the fiscal year.

Our examination of City records and discussions with City personnel disclosed that disbursements of moneys received in the Downtown CRA Trust Fund and Riverfront CRA Trust Fund for capital outlay purposes are not reported as CRA expenditures in the City's audited financial statements. Rather, CRA moneys are transferred from the applicable CRA Trust Fund to applicable City capital projects funds, and disbursements of those moneys for capital outlay purposes are reported as expenditures in the capital projects funds when incurred. To determine the extent to which such moneys were not reported as capital outlay expenditures of the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA in the City's 2016-17 and 2017-18 audited financial statements, we reviewed the 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18 fiscal year transfers out of CRA Trust Funds and the subsequent expenditures associated with the transfers, as recorded in City capital project funds.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Section 163.387(7)(c), Florida Statutes.

<sup>69</sup> Section 163.387(1)(a), Florida Statutes.

<sup>70</sup> Section 163.387(8), Florida Statutes.

<sup>71</sup> Effective October 1, 2019, Chapter 2019-163, Laws of Florida, amended Section 163.387(8), Florida Statutes, to require that CRAs with revenues or a total of expenditures and expenses in excess of \$100,000 provide for a trust fund audit as part of a separate financial audit of the CRA. CRAs with revenues or a total of expenditures and expenses of \$100,000 or less may provide for a trust fund audit as part of the financial audit of a county or municipality.

<sup>72</sup> We included the 2015-16 fiscal year transfers in our review as there was often a delay between the transfer of funds and the expenditure funded by the transfer.

Table 3 shows the amounts of moneys transferred from the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA Trust Funds to capital projects maintained within City capital projects funds for the 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18 fiscal years.

**Table 3**  
**Transfers Out of CRA Trust Funds**  
**by Capital Project**  
**For the 2015-16 Through 2017-18 Fiscal Years**

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
<b>From Downtown CRA Trust Fund for:</b>			
Riverview Park Improvements <sup>a</sup>	\$20,000	\$32,000	\$ 25,000
West Crane Creek Pedestrian Bridge <sup>b</sup>	20,000	-	-
Compensation and Classification Study <sup>b</sup>	-	270	-
Archway/Gateway Painting <sup>b</sup>	-	-	25,000
<b>From Riverfront CRA Trust Fund for:</b>			
Phase I of the Olde Eau Gallie District Lighting Project <sup>b</sup>	-	20,000	125,000
Compensation and Classification Study <sup>b</sup>	-	135	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b><u>\$40,000</u></b>	<b><u>\$52,405</u></b>	<b><u>\$175,000</u></b>

<sup>a</sup> Accounted for in the City Recreation Improvement Fund.

<sup>b</sup> Accounted for in the City General Construction Fund.

Source: City records.

As shown in Table 4, the City capital project funds that received the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA transfers incurred capital outlay expenditures that were all or partially funded by the transfers.

**Table 4**  
**CRA Transfers Expended in City Capital Project Funds**  
**by Capital Project**  
**For the 2015-16 Through 2017-18 Fiscal Years**

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
<b>Use of Downtown CRA Transferred Funds</b>			
Riverview Park Improvements	\$ -	\$72,000 <sup>a</sup>	\$12,800
West Crane Creek Pedestrian Bridge	-	-	-
Archway/Gateway Painting	-	-	831
<b>Use of Riverfront CRA Transferred Funds</b>			
Phase I - Olde Eau Gallie District Lighting Project	-	-	8,400
<b>Totals</b>	<b><u>\$ -</u></b>	<b><u>\$72,000</u></b>	<b><u>\$22,031</u></b>

<sup>a</sup> Includes use of \$20,000, \$20,000, and \$32,000 transferred from the Downtown CRA in the 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17 fiscal years, respectively.

Source: City records.

The capital expenditures in the 2016-17 and 2017-18 fiscal years were reported as capital outlay expenditures in the aggregate for the City's nonmajor funds on the statement of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balances in the City's audited financial statements for those fiscal years, instead of Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA Trust Fund expenditures.

City personnel indicated that an accounting decision was made to transfer money from the CRA trust funds to City capital projects funds and record the expenditures within the City capital projects funds rather than directly record the expenditures within the CRA trust funds because CRA trust funds are special revenue funds and the City prefers to record capital expenditures in capital projects funds. City personnel also indicated that the practice of transferring CRA trust fund moneys to City capital project funds, was established by a former City employee based on CRA resources being insufficient to finance large capital projects and, therefore, the transfer of CRA moneys to City capital projects funds facilitates the accumulation of CRA and other capital outlay moneys sufficient to complete such projects. City personnel further indicated that they believe the process to be transparent, as the transferred money is associated with specific projects within the City capital project fund accounting records. Notwithstanding, reporting CRA trust fund transfers out, instead of expenditures, reduces the transparency of CRA operations to the public and could affect the determination of whether the CRA expenditures meet the statutory threshold requiring a separate financial audit.<sup>73</sup>

**Recommendation: To enhance the transparency of Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA operations and help ensure that financial audit thresholds are properly determined, amounts expended from CRA resources should be reported as expenditures in the CRA trust funds instead of transfers out.**

### **Finding 13: Guarantees for Payment**

Project developers are typically required to provide guarantees for payment specific to each project should the developer not satisfy the contract job requirements. These guarantees include letters of credit, payment and performance bonds, or other forms of security, and protect the interests of the local government if a developer does not properly perform or complete a development project.

During the period October 2017 through March 2019, as part of the Downtown CRA Public-Private Development Program (Program),<sup>74</sup> two development projects were in progress, the Highline Redevelopment (Highline) Project and the Strawbridge Hotel (Strawbridge) Project. The Highline Project was construction of a multi-use building consisting of 171 apartments and 8,600 feet of retail and restaurant space along with public facility and infrastructure improvements. The Strawbridge Project was construction of a 156-room hotel, structured parking, and off-site public improvements. As of March 2017 and August 2018, the estimated construction costs of the Highline and Strawbridge Projects were \$29.6 million and \$35.5 million, respectively, and the Program provided for the following financial payments to the Projects' developers:

- \$2.4 million upon completion of the Highline Project.
- 75 percent of the tax increment funding generated by the Strawbridge Hotel property for the 3 years following project completion and 50 percent of the tax increment funding generated and paid for the 17 years thereafter.

<sup>73</sup> Section 163.387(8), Florida Statutes.

<sup>74</sup> The Public-Private Development Program was adopted as an amendment to the Downtown CRA's community redevelopment plan in 2014 and enables the CRA to enter into public-private partnerships to facilitate large-scale real estate development projects costing \$5 million or more by providing financial incentives to aid private real estate activity.

To determine whether the Downtown CRA was provided with guarantees for payment for the two projects, we examined the agreements associated with each project and found that:

- The Highline Project developer posted a payment bond of \$30.1 million, which covered the cost of constructing the multi-use building and parking lot on private land. The payment bond ensured that laborers, material suppliers, and equipment suppliers would be paid for the project but did not include the City or Downtown CRA as an obligee. For the portion of the project taking place on City land (public facility and infrastructure improvements of \$1.3 million), payment and performance bonds were issued and included the City as an obligee and provided protection if the developer did not satisfy the contract job requirements. However, the payment and performance bonds only provided the CRA with limited security for the project given the project's overall estimated cost totaled \$29.6 million and, consequently, City residents had limited assurance that the CRA considered all the risks associated with a failed project.
- The City did not require the Strawbridge Project developer to provide a performance bond since the City only requires performance bonds for projects or portions of projects constructed on public land, and the Strawbridge Project was constructed entirely on private property.

In response to our inquiry, City personnel indicated that, since the developers provided non-refundable deposits for impact fees of \$275,000 and \$368,740 for the Highline and Strawbridge Projects, respectively, and the developers will not receive incentive payments until completion of the projects, the developers have a financial interest in completing the projects without required guarantees for payment. Additionally, City personnel indicated that:

- The apartment building and private parking portions of the Highline Project and the entire Strawbridge Project were being constructed on private property. If payment and performance bonds were issued for those portions of the projects with the City or Downtown CRA listed as the obligee and the developers did not fulfill their contract job requirements, the City would find it legally difficult, if not impossible, to complete the projects without the owners' consent.
- In the event a developer does not satisfy contract job requirements, the City could utilize code enforcement mechanisms, such as levying fines and issuing liens, to remedy any deficiencies that result in City code violations.

Notwithstanding, the Downtown CRA did not receive adequate guarantees for payment should the developers not properly perform or complete the projects because:

- As referenced in the City's response, non-refundable deposits for impact fees of \$275,000 and \$368,740 only provide a minimal amount of security for the Highline and Strawbridge Projects as the total costs of the projects were estimated to be \$29.6 million and \$35.5 million, respectively.
- Similarly, the Highline Project performance bond of \$1.3 million attributable to improvements of public property adjacent to the project was insignificant relative to the total project amount of \$29.6 million. Payment and performance guarantees, even given their practical complexity, require developers to memorialize their sincere intent to perform according to the contract and would reassure the public that the Downtown CRA considered the risk of the developer not satisfactorily completing a development project.
- Although the amounts payable to the developers upon completion of the Highline and Strawbridge Projects provide incentive for the developers to complete the projects, absent payment and performance guarantees, the City has limited assurance that the projects will be fully and satisfactorily completed if the developers do not fulfill their commitments.

Properly executed payment and performance guarantees provided prior to contract execution, provide additional assurance that development projects within the CRA will be properly or fully completed. As

guarantees for payment require developers to memorialize their sincere intent to perform according to the contract, such guarantees also reassure the public that the CRA considered the risk that the developer may not satisfactorily complete a development project.

**Recommendation: To protect the Downtown CRA's interests and provide assurance of satisfactory completion of development projects, the CRA should establish procedures that require, prior to executing a contract with a developer, the developer to provide guarantees for payments, such as letters of credit, payment and performance bonds, or other forms of security.**

#### **Finding 14: CRA Donations**

The Attorney General has opined<sup>75</sup> that a public purpose may be carried out through donations, provided the local governmental entity determines that an entity purpose is served by such donations and proper safeguards are implemented to assure the accomplishment of that purpose. During the period October 2017 through March 2019, the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA made a total of four donations to two external organizations. The donations to the organizations totaled \$175,000 and \$82,500, respectively.

To help ensure and demonstrate that donations to external organizations accomplish an authorized public purpose, the CRAs characterized the donations as grants and established grant agreements that outlined and documented the terms of the grants. The grant agreements require, for example, the recipient to:

- Retain financial records, supporting documentation, and other records pertinent to the grant for a period of 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the grant was awarded and ensure that such records are available for inspection by the CRA.
- Agree to allow the CRA to conduct audits<sup>76</sup> involving performance or accounting matters of the external organization at any time to assure compliance with the grant agreement.
- Provide quarterly reports showing accomplishment of required activities outlined in the grant agreement.

As part of our audit, we requested for examination CRA records supporting the four donations to the two external organizations. Our examination disclosed that the external organizations provided to the CRAs the required quarterly reports. However, the reports only provided a general overview of the external organizations' activities during the reporting period and did not contain sufficient detail to fully describe how the donations were ultimately used. For example, the June 2018 quarterly report submitted by the Melbourne Main Street organization included pictures of events and a profit and loss statement listing the income and expenses by account for the quarter; however, the report did not list the amount of expenditures and types of activities funded by the donation from the Downtown CRA. Absent reports containing sufficient detail to evidence the organizations' activities for which the donations were used, the CRAs have limited assurance that the donated funds were used for the specific purposes described in the grant agreements.

Additionally, although the CRAs were permitted to audit the external organizations at any time to assure compliance with the grant agreement, the CRAs did not examine the records of the two external

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<sup>75</sup> Attorney General Opinion No. 2002-18.

<sup>76</sup> In this context, "audits" could include examinations by designated City staff of the contracted organizations' records.

organizations during the period October 2017 through March 2019. In response to our inquiries, City personnel indicated that City personnel, the CRA Advisory Committees, and the CRA Boards reviewed the activities of the external organizations for compliance with grant agreement terms at the end of each program year prior to recommending continuation of the annual agreements and provided several documents including:

- CRA meeting minutes.
- City Manager agenda reports.
- Internal memoranda.
- Annual reports.
- Grant agreements.
- Compiled financial statements.

However, the documents only provided a general overview of the external organizations' activities during the reporting period and did not support an examination of the organizations' performance or accounting matters to verify that donations were used for the specified purposes. Without documented examination and verification procedures, the CRAs have limited assurance that the external organizations used donated funds consistent with the grant agreement's intended public purpose.

**Recommendation: To ensure Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA donations to external organizations are used for their intended public purposes, the CRAs should:**

- **Ensure that agreements executed with external organizations require those organizations to submit, as part of their quarterly reports, documentation showing how the donated funds were expended to accomplish the specific public purpose for the donations.**
- **Periodically examine records maintained by the external organizations to verify that the documentation provided to the CRAs is supported by external organization records.**

## **OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY**

The Auditor General conducts operational audits of governmental entities to provide the Legislature, Florida's citizens, public entity management, and other stakeholders unbiased, timely, and relevant information for use in promoting government accountability and stewardship and improving government operations. Pursuant to Section 11.45(2)(j), Florida Statutes, the Legislative Auditing Committee, at its February 7, 2019, meeting, directed us to conduct this operational audit of the City of Melbourne, the Melbourne Community Redevelopment Agency (Downtown CRA), and the Olde Eau Gallie Riverfront CRA (Riverfront CRA).

We conducted this operational audit from May 2019 through October 2020 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.<sup>77</sup> Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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<sup>77</sup> *Government Auditing Standards*, December 2011.

The objectives of this operational audit were to:

- Evaluate management's performance in establishing and maintaining internal controls, including controls designed to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse, and in administering assigned responsibilities in accordance with applicable laws, ordinances, contracts, grant agreements, and other guidelines.
- Examine internal controls designed and placed in operation to promote and encourage the achievement of management's control objectives in the categories of compliance, economic and efficient operations, reliability of records and reports, and the safeguarding of assets, and identify weaknesses in those internal controls.
- Identify statutory and fiscal changes that may be recommended to the Legislature pursuant to Section 11.45(7)(h), Florida Statutes.

This audit was designed to identify, for those programs, activities, or functions included within the scope of the audit, deficiencies in management's internal controls, instances of noncompliance with applicable laws, ordinances, contracts, grant agreements, and other guidelines; and instances of inefficient or ineffective operational policies, procedures, or practices. The focus of this audit was to identify problems so that they may be corrected in such a way as to improve government accountability and efficiency and the stewardship of management. Professional judgment has been used in determining significance and audit risk and in selecting the particular transactions, legal compliance matters, records, and controls considered.

As described in more detail below, for those programs, activities, and functions included within the scope of our audit, our audit work included, but was not limited to, communicating to management and those charged with governance the scope, objectives, timing, overall methodology, and reporting of our audit; obtaining an understanding of the program, activity, or function; exercising professional judgment in considering significance and audit risk in the design and execution of the research, interviews, tests, analyses, and other procedures included in the audit methodology; obtaining reasonable assurance of the overall sufficiency and appropriateness of the evidence gathered in support of our audit findings and conclusions; and reporting on the results of the audit as required by governing laws and auditing standards.

Our audit included the selection and examination of transactions and records for the audit period October 2017 through March 2019, and selected transactions taken prior and subsequent thereto. Unless otherwise indicated in this report, these transactions and records were not selected with the intent of statistically projecting the results, although we have presented for perspective, where practicable, information concerning relevant population value or size and quantifications relative to the items selected for examination.

An audit by its nature, does not include a review of all records and actions of City and CRA management, personnel, and vendors, and as a consequence, cannot be relied upon to identify all instances of noncompliance, fraud, abuse, or inefficiency.

In conducting our audit, we:

- Reviewed applicable laws, contracts, grant agreements, and City ordinances, policies, and procedures, and interviewed City personnel to gain an understanding of the City's processes and to determine whether the City had established effective policies and procedures for major City and CRA functions, such as procurement, finance, and community development.

- Examined minutes of City Commission, Downtown CRA, and Riverfront CRA meetings held during the audit period, and the minutes of selected meetings held prior and subsequent to the audit period, to determine the propriety and sufficiency of actions taken related to the programs, activities, and functions included in the scope of this audit.
- Determined whether the City had established anti-fraud policies and procedures to provide guidance to employees for communicating known or suspected fraud to appropriate individuals.
- Evaluated the adequacy of City policies and procedures related to identifying potential conflicts of interest. For selected City officials, reviewed Department of State, Division of Corporations, records; statements of financial interests; and City records to identify any potential relationships that represented a conflict of interest with City vendors.
- From the 21 monetary donations to external organizations totaling \$167,973 during the audit period, examined City records supporting 13 selected donations totaling \$121,954 to determine if the donations were properly approved and documented as serving public purposes prior to the donations being made, and that the uses of the donated funds were sufficiently monitored to ensure that the documented public purposes were served.
- Examined City records supporting 11 City-owned properties leased or otherwise provided to external organizations at nominal rates as of March 2019 to determine if the lease or other agreements were properly approved and served a documented public purpose, and whether the City retained sufficient control of the properties to help ensure the accomplishment of the documented public purpose. Additionally, we determined whether the City periodically assessed the fair market lease value of those properties for the purpose of ensuring that information was made available to enable cost-beneficial decisions.
- Examined City records to determine whether a donation of \$15,000 to an external organization for the repair of a City-owned building leased to an external organization:
  - Represented a related party transaction and whether the transaction complied with Section 112.313(3), Florida Statutes.
  - Was made in accordance with applicable City policies and procedures and good business practices.
- Examined City records supporting the City purchase of real property in April 2016 for \$315,000 to determine whether the purchase was made in accordance with City ordinances, City policies and procedures, and good business practices.
- Inquired of City personnel regarding the methodology for allocating City salary and benefit costs to the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA and evaluated whether the allocation during the audit period accurately reflected the actual cost of services provided by City personnel to the CRAs.
- Reviewed meeting minutes during the audit period for the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA Boards and Advisory Committees to determine whether the CRAs held all required meetings, properly noticed the meetings, promptly recorded minutes of the meetings, promptly reviewed and approved the minutes, and promptly made the minutes readily accessible to the public. Additionally, we determined whether the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA published a schedule of meetings for the 2018 and 2019 calendar years in accordance with Section 189.015(1), Florida Statutes.
- Examined City accounting records to determine whether the records provided adequate accountability for CRA financial transactions.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> The City processes the financial transactions and maintains the accounting records for the CRAs.

- Obtained Brevard County's (County) approved resolution delegating authority to the City to establish and maintain the Riverfront CRA and evaluated the City's compliance with key provisions in the resolution.<sup>79</sup>
- Reviewed the budget resolutions adopting the 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal year Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA budgets to determine whether the budgets were properly prepared and included balances brought forward from prior fiscal years.
- Determined whether the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA adopted and amended their 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal year budgets in compliance with Section 189.016, Florida Statutes, and did not expend moneys in excess of amounts established in those budgets, as amended.
- Examined City, Downtown CRA, and Riverfront CRA records to determine whether the CRAs received the correct amount of tax increment financing from the County and the City during the 2017-18 and 2018-19 fiscal years in accordance with Section 163.387(1), Florida Statutes.
- Determined whether the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA maintained on the CRAs' or City's Web sites the information required by State law.
- Examined Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA records to determine whether the CRAs complied with Section 163.356(3)(a), Florida Statutes, which prohibits CRA Commissioners from receiving compensation for their services.
- From the 18 accounts with non-payroll expenditures totaling \$1.2 million during the audit period, examined Downtown CRA records supporting the six largest expenditures totaling \$1 million to determine whether the expenditures were included in the CRA Plan and complied with Section 163.387, Florida Statutes.
- From the 12 accounts with non-payroll expenditures totaling \$134,210 during the audit period, examined Riverfront CRA records supporting expenditures of \$119,239 recorded in the 4 largest accounts to determine whether the expenditures were included in the CRA Plan and complied with Section 163.387, Florida Statutes.
- Examined Riverfront CRA records to determine whether the CRA monitored the \$17,500 grant awarded to an external organization during the audit period to ensure the award was properly expended in accordance with the grant agreement.
- Determined whether the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA disposed of ending trust fund balances as of September 30, 2018, and September 30, 2019, in accordance with Section 163.387, Florida Statutes.
- Examined Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA records to determine whether the CRAs timely filed complete reports of activities for the 2016-17 and 2017-18 fiscal years with the City and published notices that the reports had been filed, in accordance with Section 163.356(3)(c), Florida Statutes.
- Determined whether the Downtown CRA and Riverfront CRA provided for audits of their trust funds by independent certified public accountants for the 2016-17 fiscal year in accordance with Section 163.387, Florida Statutes.
- Communicated on an interim basis with applicable officials to ensure the timely resolution of issues involving controls and noncompliance.
- Performed various other auditing procedures, including analytical procedures, as necessary, to accomplish the objectives of the audit.

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<sup>79</sup> The Downtown CRA was established in 1982, prior to the establishment of Brevard County's charter in 1995. Therefore, a delegation of authority was not required by State law.

- Prepared and submitted for management response the findings and recommendations that are included in this report and which describe the matters requiring corrective actions. Management's response is included in this report under the heading **MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE**.

## ***AUTHORITY***

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Pursuant to the provisions of Section 11.45, Florida Statutes, I have directed that this report be prepared to present the results of our operational audit.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sherrill F. Norman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Sherrill F. Norman, CPA  
Auditor General

## MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE

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# City of Melbourne



Mayor & City Council • City Clerk's Office  
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January 25, 2021

Ms. Sherrill F. Norman, CPA  
Auditor General  
State of Florida  
Claude Denson Pepper Building, Suite G74  
111 West Madison Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1450

Dear Ms. Norman,

Pursuant to Section 11.45(4)(d), Florida Statutes, we respectfully submit the enclosed revised written response to the preliminary and tentative audit findings and recommendations relating to the operational audit of the City of Melbourne, Melbourne Community Redevelopment Agency, and Olde Eau Gallie Riverfront Community Redevelopment Agency.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the findings of this audit and further strengthen City and CRA policies and procedures moving forward.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Alfrey", written in a cursive style.

Paul Alfrey  
Mayor

Enclosure

**REVISED RESPONSE TO PRELIMINARY AND TENTATIVE AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
OPERATIONAL AUDIT OF THE CITY OF MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY,  
AND OLDE EAU GALLIE RIVERFRONT COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

**Response to Finding 1: Donation Policies**

The City established a grants-in-aid policy in 2001, which has been amended and/or reviewed by City Council on multiple occasions, with the most recent update in September 2019. The policy was developed to distribute a limited amount of budgeted City funds specifically identified as “Grants-in-Aid” to external organizations that serve a public purpose. The policy was not intended to cover every circumstance in which the City Council could authorize funding to an external organization. The City acknowledges that during the audit period, City Council approved donations to three organizations outside of the grants-in-aid program and that the City has not adopted a procedure to apply to grants outside of the grants-in-aid program.

**Corrective Action:**

The City will establish a procedure for the donation of City funds to external organizations that may be authorized apart from the grants-in-aid program.

**Response to Finding 2: Donation Monitoring**

As stated in the preliminary and tentative findings, the City established *Administrative Policy 606 – Repairs, Maintenance or Improvements to City Property* in October 2019 to address the manner in which repairs and/or improvements are to be made on City property subject to building leases. Additionally, the policy requires that if repairs or maintenance of leased property are proposed outside of the current terms of the lease agreement, the managing City department will initiate an amendment to the lease agreement to be brought before City Council for consideration.

**Corrective Action:**

The City will establish a policy setting the required level of documentation to be included in agreements with external organizations for use of City-donated funds, which serve a public purpose, or lease of City property. The documentation required to be submitted to the City will be set at a level sufficient to demonstrate how the funds were used to accomplish the intended public purpose. The established policy will provide for the periodic examination of such records in order to verify that the reports and documentation provided to the City are supported by external organization records. The City will adhere to the new policy requiring the periodic examination of such records and will continue to adhere to *Administrative Policy 606 – Repairs, Maintenance or Improvements to City Property* as established in October 2019.

**Response to Finding 3: City-Owned Properties**

All lease agreements are considered and authorized by City Council at public meetings. The City acknowledges that it does not have a policy relating to determining fair market lease value of City-owned properties leased to external organizations for nominal amounts.

**Corrective Action:**

The City will establish a policy to determine the fair market lease value of City-owned properties leased to or used by external organizations in order to determine if rentals of less than fair market value are comparable to the value of the public services provided by the external organizations.

**Response to Finding 4: Land Acquisition Options**

City Code, Section 2-633 addresses acquisition of real property by the City. Purchase of the Sherwood property fell within this provision and has allowed for the development of a stormwater treatment train to provide significant nutrient removal from the Indian River Lagoon. Nevertheless, the City acknowledges that it does not have a policy on documentation necessary to support land acquisition considerations. Establishing a policy would make more transparent the evaluations conducted by City staff to support City Council's ability to make informed and documented decisions regarding property purchases.

**Corrective Action:**

The City will establish policies and procedures regarding documentation to support the selection of the most cost-effective or advantageous site acquisitions including legal guidance, consultant reports, land appraisals, and negotiation efforts.

**Response to Finding 5: Land Acquisition Contracts**

The City acknowledges that it does not have a policy for land acquisition that addresses the existence of any potential contamination and the need for remediation.

**Corrective Action:**

The City will establish policies and procedures regarding the determination of potential contamination on or adjacent to proposed land acquisitions in order to determine if those properties can be used for the City intended purpose along with communication of identified concerns and establishing terms of land acquisition contracts outlining responsibilities for remediation of contamination.

**Response to Finding 6: City Salary and Benefit Costs Charged to Community Redevelopment Agencies**

The City will continue to maximize efficiencies in its administrative costs associated with the CRAs, by conservatively utilizing City personnel to manage the agencies and implement CRA programs. Historically, CRA personnel expenses were regularly reviewed by management, included within the respective annual budgets, and approved by the CRA boards. The need to track hours was thought to be unnecessary as the City provided significant services at no additional cost. For example, the City historically provided at no cost to the CRA the accounting services by the City's Finance Department, engineering services through the City's Engineering Department, and legal services through the City Attorney's office.

**Corrective Action:**

The City and the CRA boards will establish a policy that provides a methodology for the allocation of the cost of City services provided to the CRAs as well as periodic adjustments of charges to reflect actual costs.

### **Response to Finding 7: CRA Policies and Procedures**

As stated in the preliminary and tentative findings, the City and the CRA boards have utilized state law contained in Chapter 163 Part III and Chapter 189 of Florida Statutes, collectively with City Code and implemented City policies and City procedures for the safeguarding of CRA resources. The CRA boards, although comprised of the City Council, have not separately adopted City Code, policies, and procedures for use in CRA operations.

#### **Corrective Action:**

Consistent with the audit recommendation to adopt policies and procedures for all aspects of CRA operations, the City and CRA boards will memorialize policies and procedures, as appropriate, based on statutes specifically applicable to CRAs and generally applicable to special districts.

### **Response to Finding 8: CRA Board Meeting Notices**

As acknowledged by the auditor, the City publishes the CRA meeting schedule identical to the City Council meetings because CRA matters could be heard at any City Council meeting (as City Council serves as the governing board of the CRA). Meetings of the City Council do not always contain business to be considered by the City's CRAs. The auditor recommends additional clarification. Discussions with the auditor indicated a concern that interested persons must review the Council agenda on the City website or monitor the CRA website to determine whether a CRA item will be considered.

#### **Corrective Action:**

On December 17, 2020, the City published a revised notice for the 2021 calendar year with additional language that provides interested parties with a direct link to the City's enhanced CRA website to determine if an upcoming City Council meeting agenda will include any business where the City Council will convene as any of the city's three CRAs. It is the City's understanding that this additional website link satisfies the additional clarification recommended.

### **Response to Finding 9: CRA Plans**

The preliminary and tentative findings detail statutory requirements of a CRA plan and identify and acknowledge the elements in the Olde Eau Gallie Riverfront CRA Redevelopment Plan that address each of those requirements. The preliminary and tentative findings acknowledge that the redevelopment plan did include CRA redevelopment cost estimates. Additionally, the preliminary and tentative findings recognize that the redevelopment plan identifies projects which have been implemented, such as streetscaping, lighting, the Main Street America Program, a façade program, and acquisition of additional public parking. In the interest of transparency, the recommendation of the auditor is that the plan should be updated to eliminate outdated projects and update estimates of costs. The City does not object to committing to update the plan periodically such that it reflects the information provided in the CRA annual report to taxing authorities and available to the general public on the CRA website.

#### **Corrective Action:**

The City is currently in the early process of implementing the audit recommendation by preparing an amendment to the Olde Eau Gallie Riverfront CRA Redevelopment Plan, for CRA board consideration,

to include more updated information related to CRA projects and initiatives, with a specific schedule of estimated costs. Moreover, the City acknowledges that this redevelopment plan amendment will provide enhanced transparency of projects and expenditures consistent with the goals of the recent 2019 legislative changes within Section 163.387, Florida Statutes.

#### **Response to Finding 10: CRA Budgets**

Although the CRAs have not had a written budget policy, the CRA boards have adopted budgets on a fund level basis. The City's history of favorable audits by independent auditors reflect the validity of the City's practice. During the audit period, independent auditors did not report any findings on budget adoption or adjustments to the adopted budget in their audit report relating to CRAs, which reports are signed by a Certified Public Accountant well versed in Florida state law, Government Accounting and Financial Reporting Standards and industry practices. The practice is further validated in the City's receipt of the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting awarded to the City by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada for over 33 years.

##### **Corrective Action:**

The City and the CRA boards will establish budget policies and procedures that stipulate that estimated year-end fund balances, using the most current information available, will be voted as a source of funds to be used in the next fiscal year's budget. If the actual year-end balance, upon officially closing the books, is different from the estimated balance, a budget adjustment will be presented timely to City Council and the CRA Boards for amendment. The policies and procedures will also address the legal level of budgetary control for all adopted budgets, which will allow the readers of the financial statements to readily determine whether resources were expended within budgeted amounts consistent with CRA intent.

In February 2020, City staff made changes to the Downtown and Riverfront CRA web pages, after the auditor suggested that the format for accessing CRA budget information was not conspicuous enough to the general public. Both CRA pages now contain two years of CRA budgets and amendments under the title of "Budgets and Budget Amendments." Additionally, the City added a link to the entire City budget inclusive of the CRAs on each CRA page under "Additional Resources." The City will continue to update the CRA web pages as modified in February 2020 and the adopted policies and procedures will reflect the same.

#### **Response to Finding 11: Ending Balances in CRA Trust Funds**

Effective October 1, 2019, Section 163.387, Florida Statutes was amended to require an audit report that will, among other requirements, include a finding by the independent auditor as to whether the CRA is in compliance regarding the allowable use of any moneys remaining in the trust fund on the last day of the fiscal year.

##### **Corrective Action:**

The CRA boards will establish policies to clearly document evidence that moneys remaining in CRA trust funds at the end of the fiscal year are obligated to purposes as authorized by state law.

### **Response to Finding 12: CRA Trust Fund Uses**

The City transfers funds from the CRA trust fund to redevelopment project funds, otherwise known as capital project funds. The City purposefully reports all capital related expenditures in capital project funds, in part, so that projects that have multiple funding sources will report the total amount of the capital costs for that project in one place. The reader of the financial statements will know, without having to go to multiple separate funds, the true total cost of a capital improvement. It also makes capitalizing project costs into fixed assets for financial statement reporting more efficient.

#### **Corrective Action:**

Effective October 1, 2019, Chapter 2019-163, Laws of Florida, amended Section 163.387, Florida Statutes, to require the City's CRAs to provide for a trust fund audit as part of a separate financial audit of each CRA. With a separate financial audit, CRA revenues and expenditures will be audited and reported on separately. The City will also include Supplementary Information to the CRA financial statements that will document capital expenditures incurred, by project, within the fiscal year. The City has signed an engagement letter with the City's Independent Auditor to conduct an audit effective for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020.

### **Response to Finding 13: Guarantees for Payment**

The City acknowledges that the CRA does not have a written policy or procedure for evaluating whether developers provide letters of credit, performance bonds or other forms of security necessary to protect CRA interests. Despite not having a written procedure, the City and the CRA exercise sound business judgment and responsible public stewardship in determining the security necessary to protect CRA interests.

#### **Corrective Action:**

The CRA will establish a procedure for economic development in the CRA to identify the process of evaluating risk and securing CRA interests.

### **Response to Finding 14: CRA Donations**

The preliminary and tentative finding regarding CRA donations is similar to the concern set forth in Finding 2 and recommends that the CRA boards enhance policies and procedures regarding donations to external organizations to include additional levels of documentation.

#### **Corrective Action:**

The CRA boards will enhance policies and procedures regarding the required level of documentation to be included in agreements with external organizations serving a public purpose for use of CRA-donated funds. The documentation required to be submitted as part of the quarterly reports will be set at a level sufficient to demonstrate how the funds were used to accomplish the intended public purpose. The established policy will provide for the periodic examination of such records in order to verify that the reports and documentation provided to the CRAs are supported by external organization records. The City will adhere to the new policy requiring the periodic examination of such records.