

# **NICEVILLE OLD TOWN LANDING REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**



**A SMALL COMMUNITY PLANNING PROJECT FOR 2022 FRA AWARD  
CONDISERATION**

**Niceville Community Redevelopment Agency**

208 North Partin Drive  
Niceville, FL 32578

NICEVILLE, FLORIDA COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
OLD TOWN LANDING REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

a

Small Communities Planning Project  
for Consideration by:

The Florida Redevelopment Association: BEST BOOK AWARD

The Project: Current Status

The Niceville CRA Commission accepted a Historic Downtown Redevelopment Plan from its consultants, S&ME Redevelopment Planners, on November 19, 2020. The Plan designated as the Old Town Landing Redevelopment Plan was initiated by the Niceville CRA as a result of its initial CRA Plan on March 01, 2015. The Historic Downtown concept was further defined in the 2019 CRA Plan Amendment. Subsequently, S&ME was selected from a request for letters of interest and finally from project specific proposals. S&ME was given a notice to proceed in August, 2020. The Plan was submitted to the Commission in February, 2022 and was accepted.

The Project: Getting Started

Formerly known as the “Old Settlement,” located on the north shore of Boggy Bayou of Choctawhatchee Bay, the initial concept for the CRA programs in this planning area started with the availability of grant funds from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill to purchase land for a Public Landing on Boggy Bayou. The City, with assistance from the Institute of Senior Professionals at Northwest Florida State College, developed and submitted an application for RESTORE funding through Okaloosa County. The City’s application was ranked first and funds of \$400,000 have been awarded. In addition, the Florida Legislature appropriated \$500,000 to provide for Phase I of the Public Landing construction. These facilities are in place and will serve as the water access component of the Old Town (historic downtown/old settlement) Redevelopment.

The concept of the revitalization of the Niceville historic downtown was first identified in the original Niceville CRA Plan in 2015. Since then the concept has been expanded to include a six (6) acre site for which the use of CRA, City, and grant revenues has been proposed to create and / or facilitate of an intensive public and private development concept, “Old Town”. The concept would consist of an intensive village type commercial center businesses and a destination related public facilities. Conceptually the Old Town Plan would consist of:

1. The public acquisition of adequate sites to be made available for future intensive retail businesses both sales and services;
2. The completion of a public access landing and pier to support water access and public assembly uses;
3. The reconfiguration of transportation flows for both pedestrian and vehicular transport;
4. The construction of public infrastructure for both private and public development needs through CRA funds and available grants;
5. The project would host and support public assembly activities and festivities; and
6. Developing revenue sources to support these intense developments and future improvements.

The overall goal is to create and facilitate the development of a destination specialty business area that also provides for public-use amenities and the project to be partially supported with external grant funds.

The Project: Early Development Concept “The Landing”

Many cities along the Florida and Alabama Gulf Coasts have public landings which have become focus points for public access to coastal waters, economic development, and community assembly for a wide variety of activities. Many larger cities in Florida, such as Jacksonville, Fort Lauderdale, Miami, Key West, Fort Meyers, and Saint Petersburg have public landings which provide a focus for numerous events and festivals along their waterfronts. More locally Apalachicola, Carrabelle, Baytowne Wharf, and Fairhope Alabama have public landings. The Niceville Public Landing is intended to support all other major priorities of the CRA Plan.

The project is intended to provide a public landing and watercraft mooring facility as part of the revitalization of Niceville’s Historic Old Settlement as approved in the City’s Community Redevelopment (CRA) Plan. The facility will provide watercraft access to and from Boggy Bayou for access to the restored commercial center and will provide a public use and assembly area for special events/occasions. There are three phases of the watercraft access plan to fully utilize the completed as a major contributor to the City’s water related uses and economy. Phase I, the upland access facility, has been completed. Phase II, is the subject of a Boater Improvement Fund (BIF) grant, and will construct a linear pier type landing extending along the shoreline similar to many communities which incorporate public access walkways with watercraft or working waterfront mooring facilities. Phase III is to construct an offshore public assembly pavilion for public assembly use.

The Niceville Landing Project is the major recommendation in the City’s CRA Plan. The Plan documents contributions to the local economy by providing a public use facility for watercraft access for “day docking” to utilize the redeveloped commercial area of historic downtown area. To date, the City has allocated over \$4 million to acquire the waterfront property and to construct the upland facilities for the landing. Additionally, the City has also purchased additional property adjacent to the Landing for commercial revitalization. As such, the completion and utilization of the Landing is a major component of Niceville’s Community Redevelopment efforts.

In 2012, the Institute of Senior Professionals of the Northwest Florida State College provided an Economic Assessment of the proposed project. The report concluded that:

- The proposed project is the “center piece” of the commercial restoration of the Historic Downtown District and will make a significant impact on the local economy.
- The designated project has significant potential as a year-round venue and will provide economic stimulus to the City.
- The project will anchor other developments in the Historic Old Settlement District.
- More significant will be jobs resulting from business to the Historic Redevelopment District by the signature Bayou Landing.

The Project: The Current Redevelopment Plan

On December 14, 2021, the CRA received its final Old Town Landing Redevelopment Plan from the design consultants. The plan identifies six (6) objectives which are:

1. Creates a land and water destination;
2. Extended a linear waterfront festival site;
3. Provides for a secondary internal festival/market area;
4. Provides for commercial, retail, and hospitality uses;
5. Lowers development intensity to available infrastructure capacities; and
6. Provides for adequate parking.

The plan also includes cost estimates for public infrastructure (water, sewer and stormwater), transportation and parking, and landscaping and irrigation of \$6,271,608 (see Niceville Old Town Village Conceptual Design Plan, Attachment 1).

Project Area:

The current project is located on a six-acre site of the city’s original early commercial settlement. Negotiations for additional adjacent lands are currently underway. The CRA and City currently own 90% of the project area on which there are three existing commercial buildings. The property is uplands and sloping south to the Landing on Boggy Bayou.

Plan Recommendations:

The Plan (see Attachment A, Concept 8) includes fourteen (14) commercial structures in an open parklike village shopping commons, a public assembly and festival site, and a landing with pier, pavilion, and boat moorings. The target (primarily local) businesses include: a large bed and breakfast facility for extended stays at the adjacent Eglin Air Force Base; a farmers market; a spa, salon, and fitness center; a billiards and game room parlor; a raw bar; a wine and beer bar and sales; a bakery and deli; a book and music store; ice cream and sundaes parlor; an art exhibit and sales hall; space will also be provided for food truck sales during special waterfront events.

Time Table:

With the acceptance of the Old Town Landing Redevelopment Plan, the CRA Commission adopted the following time table:

CRA OLD TOWN LANDING  
Implementation Schedule

<u>Item</u>	<u>Start Date</u>
1. Clean up site	July, 2022
2. Determine: Delegation, Overlay or PUD	July, 2022
3. Select Advisory Committee	July, 2022
4. Elevate and Determine Funding Sources	May, 2022

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 5. Get appraisal on additional adjacent property  | May, 2022       |
| 6. RFP Project Design and for Construction Manger | September, 2022 |
| 7. Determine Business Selection                   | September, 2022 |
| 8. Set up Target Business Recruiting System       | October, 2022   |
| 9. Manage Construction and Business Siting        | January, 2023   |
| 10. Hold Grand Opening                            | July, 2024      |

Estimated Public Costs to Implement the Plan:

As cited earlier, the estimated CRA supported implementation costs are estimated at \$6,271,608. This is in addition to the \$4.4 million the CRA/City of Niceville have expended to date for land purchases and site improvements. The additional costs are estimates as follows:

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| • Site preparation             | \$ 269,000       |
| • Site Improvements            | 1,711,000        |
| • Hardscape                    | 836,000          |
| • Landscape and irrigation     | 150,000          |
| • Signage and site furnishings | 300,000          |
| • Underground utilities        | <u>1,000,000</u> |
| Sub Total                      | \$4,266,400      |

Additional Costs:

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| • General Conditions (12%)                | \$ 511,988     |
| • Design of engineering, permitting (15%) | 639,960        |
| • Contingency (20%)                       | <u>853,280</u> |
| Sub Total                                 | \$2,005,208    |

TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS	\$6,271,608
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Project Funding Options:

Initially the CRA hoped to acquire a grant from “Triumph Gulf Coast” a legislatively established vehicle set up to spend \$1.5 billion in the eight western Florida counties impacted by BP’s Deep-Water Horizon oil spill. In the current round of funding community development / redevelopment projects were not part of the Triumph’s funding priorities. However, the project may still qualify for Triumph funds as funding priorities will be reviewed in the summer of 2022. There may be future opportunities for Triumph funds with a remaining total of \$900 million for the western eight counties.

At this time there appear to be several funding sources in whole or in part to fund the redevelopment effort including:

1. A CRA bond issue;

2. Federal economic development grants;
3. The Florida Legislature;
4. Federal infrastructure funds;
5. Triumph Gulf Coast 2023 or beyond
6. Okaloosa County Tourist Development Funds

NOTE: As will be explained in a later section, the CRA intends to sell the individual commercial properties in the redevelopment commercial village, thus recovering its initial capital costs for land and putting these properties back on the CRA tax rolls.

### Target Businesses

The philosophy behind the selection of commercial activities in the Old Town Landing commercial village is simply to: “recruit local businesses based on the needs of the local community.” This concept, of course, includes daily needs, as well as, the needs for public assembly and events.

As a rule of thumb, it is intended to provide local goods and services that are not available at big box stores or on the internet. Such local and individual specific events will be targeted, including for example: extended stay lodging, perishable foods, gaming facilities, personal care and fitness, local art exhibits, food and drink service, as well as specialized meeting facilities for training, presentations, or demonstrations.

A listing of potential target businesses is in the Old Town Village Plan, attachment A.

### Economic Impact

The Mission Statement in the Niceville CRA is: **“to dedicate public resources and programs to stimulate private investment in underperforming areas as officially identified in the Niceville CRA Plan”**.

The Old Town area is the major underperforming area as historic businesses have closed or found new locations along the City’s major thoroughfares. The Old Town area, in fact, was the major factor in the original establishment of the Niceville Community Redevelopment Agency.

The CRA has identified three major components providing economic impact resulting from the Old Town Landing Development Project. These are:

1. The jobs and economic activity to be created by the addition of businesses in the commercial village. The new employment is estimated at sixty to eighty jobs on a full-time basis.
2. The sale of the business sites to individual private business will provide for the CRA / City to recoup its original investment in the project sites and to place the properties back on the City/County tax rolls which are provided back to the CRA as TIF revenues.
3. The Landing Public Assembly areas will attract significant public use for programs and events and will generate both public and private revenues.

The long-term economic impact will be that the underperforming areas of the City's historic commercial business district will be reestablished as a major contributor to the City's overall economy.

Benefits to the Overall CRA Programs

For Niceville's relatively new CRA, this is its initial effort to accomplish the identified mission of the CRA and, as the City's economic development arm, to serve as the delivery system to stimulate the overall Niceville and Okaloosa County economy. The Niceville CRA Commission and staff feel that its CRA will be the catalyst to further the areas economic wellbeing and, as such, add to its quality of life.





CRA Minger Street and Edge Avenue



CRA Armstrong Avenue



CRA Niceville Landing