

# Revitalization & Redevelopment Overlay (RRIO)

## Lake Worth Commercial Corridor

The goals for the Lake Worth Road Commercial Corridor are to provide incentives to encourage infill development and redevelopment along Lake Worth Road, improve the neighborhood characteristics of the area, and improve the overall quality of the surrounding community. The Lake Worth Road Commercial Corridor is located approximately one mile west of the heart of downtown Lake Worth, and is bounded on the north by 2 nd Avenue, on the south by the L-12 Canal, on the east by Congress Avenue, and on the west by Military Trail.

The Lake Worth Road Commercial Corridor has experienced disinvestment, and is the focus of revitalization, redevelopment, and infill (RRI) efforts. In late 1994, area residents, working in partnership with various County agencies began a comprehensive effort to revitalize this area. During a workshop held by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) in April of 1996, the Countywide Community Revitalization Team (CCRT) reported to the BCC and recommended several activities for the corridor. At that meeting, direction was given by the BCC for staff to undertake a visionary process with input from area businesses and residents and to use the information and ideas collected from that process as the basis for developing specific recommendations for revitalizing the corridor. Subsequently, the Lake Worth Road Commercial Corridor Study was undertaken and yielded recommendations. On September 28, 1998, the CCRT presented to the BCC the Lake Worth Road Commercial Corridor Study and Recommendations Report. At that time, the BCC directed Staff to implement the recommendations of the study that included the following topic areas: sanitary sewer, traffic related issues, L-12 Canal Access/Maintenance issues, business organization, community involvement and activities, Landscaping/Appearance/Theme, criminal activity and community policing and zoning issues.

Specific projects have been implemented in this area as a result of the study's recommendations. The following represents the status of some of the recommendations:

### **Sewer and Street Light Installation:**

The provision of sewer infrastructure and installation of streetlights on Lake Worth Road were completed in January 2004 at the cost of \$75,000.00.

### **Merchant Association:**

The Lake Worth Corridor Property Owners and Merchants Association was formed in March 1995 to represent the business community and make decisions about the development, appearance, and image of the corridor.

### **Drainage:**

The drainage issue has been and continues to be a major obstacle to redevelopment efforts in this area. Consequently, a comprehensive area-wide drainage study to assess feasible solutions to the current drainage situation was undertaken by a consultant under the direction of the County's Water Resource Manager.

The preliminary drainage study was completed in 2001 to determine the existing drainage systems within the overall area and their respective sub areas. The study area was along Lake Worth Road from Military Trail to Congress Avenue and from the L-12 Canal north to

Lakewood Road. The amount of retention was established for the various drainage basin areas and potential locations for the retention areas within each basin were identified.

Based on the preliminary study, it has been determined that a subsequent master drainage study combining both engineering and planning should be undertaken to establish a proposed infrastructure and redevelopment plan. Currently, a request for proposal (RFP) for this study has been finalized, and it is anticipated that a contract will be signed in 2006.

### **Planning/Zoning:**

Planning and zoning related recommendations implemented include: rezoning of some properties along the south side of Lake Worth Road from Residential Medium (RM) to Commercial General (CG) and Zoning Districts in other areas of the corridor were changed from Neighborhood Commercial (CN) to Commercial General (CG).

In an effort to address zoning issues and other site development issues including the corridor's narrow commercial depth, the BCC directed Planning staff on April 4, 2000 to investigate the land use pattern in the corridor and to amend the Comprehensive Plan as necessary. As a result, in 2001 the Planning Division adopted Future Land Use Atlas (FLUA) amendments to either Commercial High or Commercial High with Cross-hatching on 22 parcels to extend the commercial depth in order to facilitate redevelopment of the corridor.

Moreover, on January 9, 2001, the BCC adopted Ordinance 2001-001 (Amending Ordinance 92-20) creating the Lake Worth Road Commercial Corridor Overlay (LWRCCO) in the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC). The LWRCCO was adopted to provide incentives to encourage infill development and redevelopment and to assist in the revitalization of the corridor.

### **Transportation Corridor/Roadway Improvements:**

Median modifications were made on Lake Worth Road in the vicinity of Home Depot. A left turn movement out from Home Depot was eliminated, and an improved u-turn lane was provided.

Improvements were also made to the intersection of Lake Worth Road and Military Trail. An additional northbound through lane was added, eliminating a lane offset through the intersection. Dual left turn lanes were added to eastbound and westbound.

### **Criminal Activity/Community Policing:**

Community policing has had great success in the Lake Worth Road Corridor. The Sheriff's Office, as part of the CCRT, continues to focus on community policing and increase its presence in the corridor when possible. On May 11, 2004, a house, once inhabited by drugs and other illegal activities, was transformed to a Community Policing Substation at 328 Urquhart Street in unincorporated Lake Worth. The property was purchased with the use of Law Enforcement Trust Funds (LETF) through a collaborative effort of county departments and community residents.

### **Future Annexation Planning Effort:**

Annexation accomplishments have remained impressive. The number and type of annexation shown for the Lake Worth Road Commercial Corridor from 2003-2005 is remarkable. Twenty-five (25) properties covering 55.9 acres were voluntarily annexed in this area. The annexed properties included both residential and commercial buildings. The County staff is currently working with the Lake Worth staff on annexation issues and anticipates the possibility toward the development of an annexation plan.

**Other Available Programs in the Area:**

Besides the foregoing accomplishments, this area benefits from various Palm Beach County economic development programs. The Impact Fee Assistance Program, a relatively new program, was approved by the BCC on January 2004 for the purpose of providing funds to small or emerging businesses in the building permitting process. The program is set up to address the year-round request for impact fee assistance on short notice, and to review and approve applications expeditiously. This program assists commercial and industrial applicants with the payment of countywide impact fees.

Other programs available to the area include: business incubation program to assist start-up and small business, create additional job opportunities, and develop a skilled workforce; Community Development Block Grant (CDBG); Development Regions Incentive Grant Program that provides technical and funding assistance to small businesses for economically revitalizing low to moderate income areas throughout Palm Beach County and Economic set-aside Grant Program.

Loan Programs are also available including: Black Business Investment Corporation, Business Loan Fund of the Palm Beaches Inc., and Community Development Business Loan Program –HUD Section 108. These programs are consistent with the September 29, 1998 recommendations on Lake Worth Road Commercial Corridor Study that required the Economic Development Office and other appropriate CCRT participating departments to identify and pursue all available funding sources for revitalization efforts within the corridor.