



# Live Oak

Community  
Redevelopment  
Agency



1995.....The Seed for Sustainable Growth.....2039

## CITY OF LIVE OAK COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

### Annual Report

**Fiscal Year 2013-2014**  
**Submitted: March 31, 2015**

Prepared by:

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City of Live Oak Finance Department

## CRA BOARD MEMBERS

- ✓ ***Councilman Keith Mixon, Chair***  
***(October 2013 – September 2014)***
  
- ✓ ***Councilman Jacob Grantham, Vice Chair***  
***(October 2013 – September 2014)***
  
- ✓ ***Councilman Bennie L. Thomas***
  
- ✓ ***Councilman John. W. Yulee, Sr.***
  
- ✓ ***Councilman Frank C. Davis***
  
- ✓ ***Tim Alcorn, with J. Sherman Frier & Associates***
  
- ✓ ***Jennifer Seaman, with Seaman's Aqua Clean***

In 1969, the Florida Legislature enacted the “Community Redevelopment Act of 1969” (Chapter 69-305). This act has been amended many times since its initial adoption and is codified in Part III of Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes. The Act is the enabling legislation for community redevelopment agencies throughout Florida.

The City of Live Oak Community Redevelopment Agency has seen many positive changes since it was established on July 11, 1995, along with the first ‘Plan’ and ‘Trust Fund’, established by ordinance on November 14, 1995. The scope of the adopted plan has been amended twice on a small scale, and once as a major overhaul/re-write.

This ‘new’ CRA Plan was drafted over the summer of 2009, and adopted via Ordinance 1267 on November 10, 2009 to further enhance the quality of life for both our residents and businesses. This new plan was the first step to outline and identify areas for redevelopment for the next 30 years, from 2009 to 2039.

Additional Plan amendments are anticipated to take place which will hone and fine-tune the future endeavors of the Agency and Area, as well as provided needed detail for analysis and funding for various areas and sub-areas within the existing district.

Our mission is to establish and maintain effective partnerships within the Live Oak Community by building a stronger, more vibrant, livable and economically sustainable redevelopment area which provides an enhanced quality of life for both residents and businesses, while preserving our historical and cultural heritage.

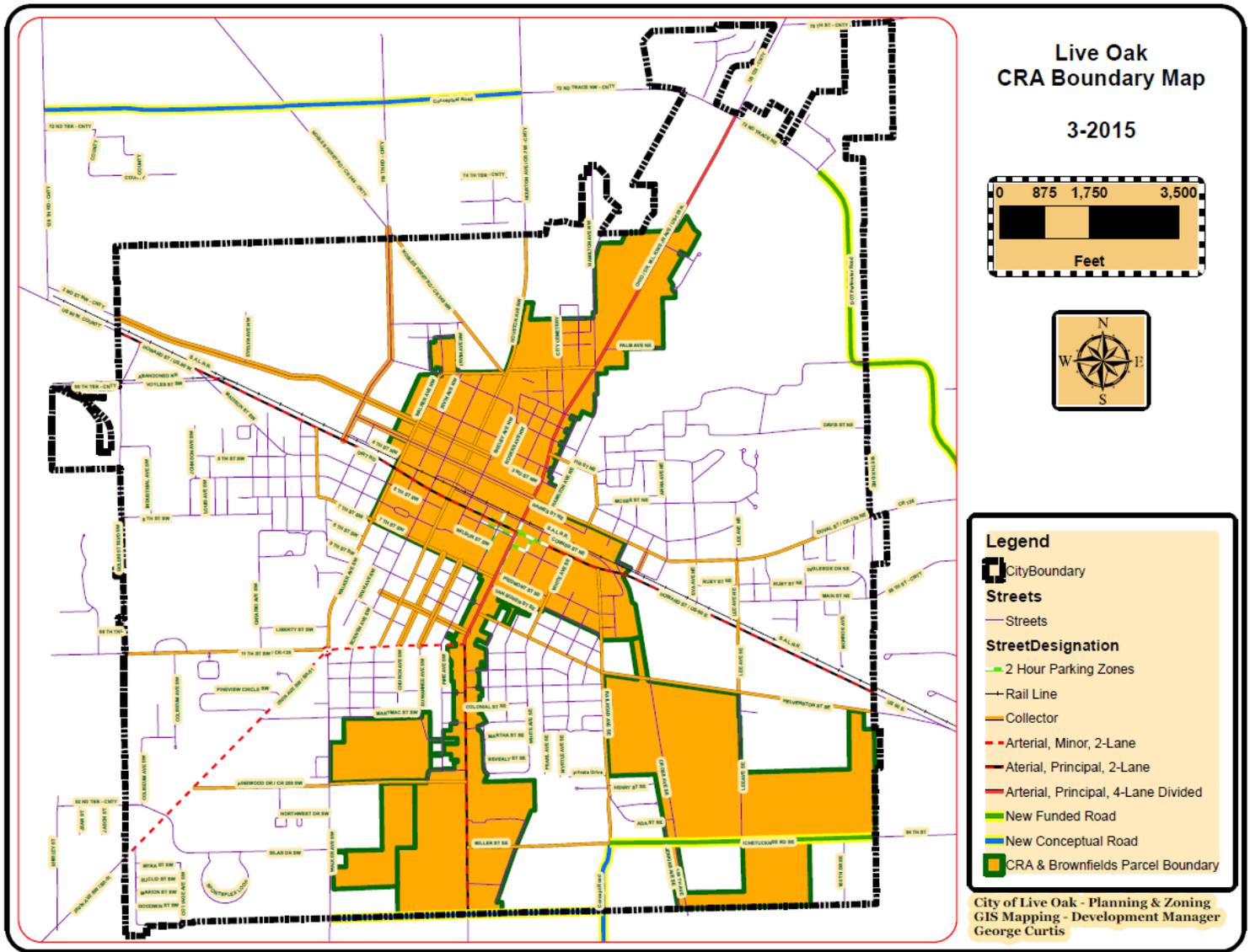
We will accomplish this through 4 main goals:

- Outreach to residents and businesses in the redevelopment area for input and collaboration;
- Promotion of the district in order to attract quality investment;
- Identification of viable projects which will have both an immediate and long-term positive effects; and
- Implementation of these projects in a feasible, yet timely, manner.

The Area adopted in our current Plan serves to direct funding and focus on areas of the city that are considered blighted and in great need of redevelopment.

CRA Area = 1,083 acres, more or less.

This is 22.3% of the current city limits, which comprises 4,857 acres total.



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## PURPOSE

In compliance with Florida Statute Chapter 163.356 (3)(c), this report is being filed concerning the annual redevelopment activities of the City of Live Oak Community Redevelopment Agency for the fiscal year 2013-2014.

The required notice of this report is posted at Live Oak City Hall, and was published in the Suwannee Democrat on Friday, March 27, 2015.

Florida Statute 189.418 requires the governing body of the special district (Agency) to adopt a budget by resolution each fiscal year, and under FS 163.387 (8), to provide each year an independent financial audit of its trust fund to each taxing authority that pays into the trust fund.

Based on this organization, the audit of the Agency's assets, liabilities, income and expenses, as required under FS 163.356 (3) ( c ) is included with the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial report (CAFR) for each fiscal year.

The fiscal year CAFR is normally completed and accepted by City Council at the beginning of May of each year. A copy of this audit will be made public and provided at that time to each taxing authority upon completion and acceptance.

This annual report will be filed with the City Clerk of the City of Live Oak and other taxing entities. It will also be available at the CRA Staff Offices, and published on the CRA Webpage under the general city website, [www.cityofliveoak.org](http://www.cityofliveoak.org).

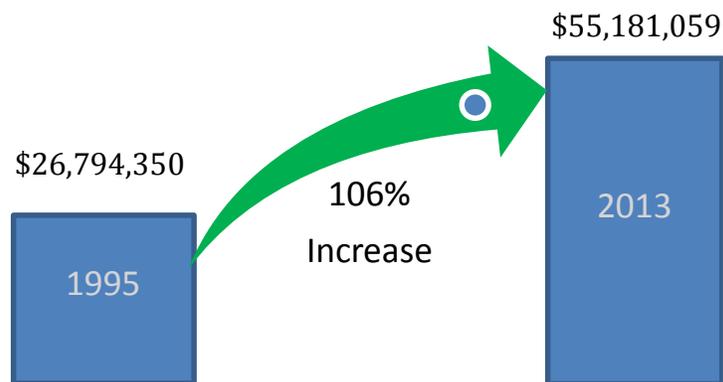
The direct link to the CRA webpage is:

[http://www.cityofliveoak.org/index.asp?SEC=9E87D2BE-970B-47D3-82F4-C75D309C7C02&Type=B\\_BASIC](http://www.cityofliveoak.org/index.asp?SEC=9E87D2BE-970B-47D3-82F4-C75D309C7C02&Type=B_BASIC)

The established 2013 taxable value for real property within the boundaries of the City of Live Oak CRA, as determined by the Suwannee County Property Appraiser's Office, was \$55,181,059. The Base Year Value of the district in 1995 was \$26,794,350.

The adopted millage rate for the reporting period for Suwannee County was .009000, and for the City of Live Oak was .0066760.

Funds are generated from ad valorem taxes assessed on real property, and by comparison of the Base Year with the Current Year taxable value. These funds are then placed in the TIF (Tax Increment Financing) fund for budgeting and expenditures.



The current Plan and funding for the district runs through the year 2039. Florida Statutes allow the Trust Fund to be established for a maximum of 60 years, if future amendments to the CRA Plan are adopted to support that. Based on an initial establishment date of 1995, the CRA has a potential life span through the year 2055.

Traditionally, CRA's have the potential to see exponential increases in value over time, if redevelopment is properly facilitated. Based on an average combined millage rate of 15.67, each increase in value of one million dollars results in \$15,670 of additional revenue.

The City of Live Oak Trust Fund is funded through Tax Incremental Financing (TIF), which are the revenues from increases in property values over the CRA’s base year of (1995). These TIF revenues are used to help fund improvements within the CRA Area for redevelopment, economic development, and infrastructure improvements. The taxing authorities are Suwannee County and the City of Live Oak.

For the 2013 – 2014 reporting period, revenues included funding received from both taxing authorities, interest, donations and multi-year project funding from previous fiscal years.

<b>Revenues</b>	<b>Actual Revenue Received</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Suwannee County	\$242,706	21%
City of Live Oak	\$180,034	16%
Donations	\$7,659	0.7%
Interest	\$1,637	0.3%
Multi-Year Project Funding	\$721,658	62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,153,694</b>	<b>100%</b>

For the 2013 – 2014 reporting period, budgeted expenditures equaled revenue totals, resulting in a balanced budget.

<b>Budgeted Expenditures</b>	<b>FY14 Budget</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Personnel Services	\$93,627	8%
Operating Expenses	\$54,195	5%
Programs	\$182,072	16%
Capital	\$823,800	71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,153,694</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the Budgeted Expenditure Chart on the previous page, each sub-total represents various types of expenses, as follows:

**Budgeted Personnel Services** expenses included salaries, taxes, retirement, life & health insurance, and worker compensation, totaling \$78,627. Community Policing added an additional \$15,000 to these expenses, for a combined total of \$93,627

**Budgeted Operating Expenses** were allocated for items such as utility services, professional services and legal fees, legal advertising, office equipment rentals and leases, operating supplies, printing services, training and travel expenses, general liability insurance and membership fees, totaling \$20,195. Parking lot rehab and street supplies added an additional \$34,000 to these expenses, for a combined total of \$54,195.

**Budgeted Programs** included our Façade Grants, Economic Development and Festivals and Events in downtown Live Oak, for a combined total of \$182,072.

**Budgeted Capital** expenditures are utilized for various projects such as are our LED Sign Monument, Park Construction & Improvements, Construction of Heritage Trail, etc., totaling \$823,800.

## Façade Grant Program

The CRA continued the very successful façade grant program from previous years. This program provided a one-time grant, up to \$8,500 (85% of \$10,000), for exterior rehabilitation of a commercial property. Funds may be utilized for a variety of improvements, including: corrections of existing code violations, handicap accessibility improvements, windows, doors, signage, painting, awnings, parking areas and landscaping.

Participation in the grant program was very strong at the end of the previous fiscal year, and several projects were approved and under construction, but not yet completed. Since remaining funds to provide for those grants were previously budgeted, they were reallocated from 12-13 to 13-14.

11 such projects were completed during the reporting period, which resulted in a total of \$52,501 of re-allocated grant funding.

Additionally, 8 new grant projects were approved, and completed, which resulted in a total of \$67,756 being funded. The total amount funded was \$120,257.

## Economic Development Initiatives

The City of Live Oak CRA provided \$31,353 for Economic Development Activities, and an additional \$6,835 for related expenses, totaling \$38,188. Activities such as our Jazz, Arts & Blues Festival, the Raid on the Suwannee, and our Freedom Festival have a direct impact on our community by drawing citizens to our downtown and CRA park areas, which in turn promotes our local businesses. Information about our Festivals and Events can be found at [www.liveoakfestivals.com](http://www.liveoakfestivals.com).



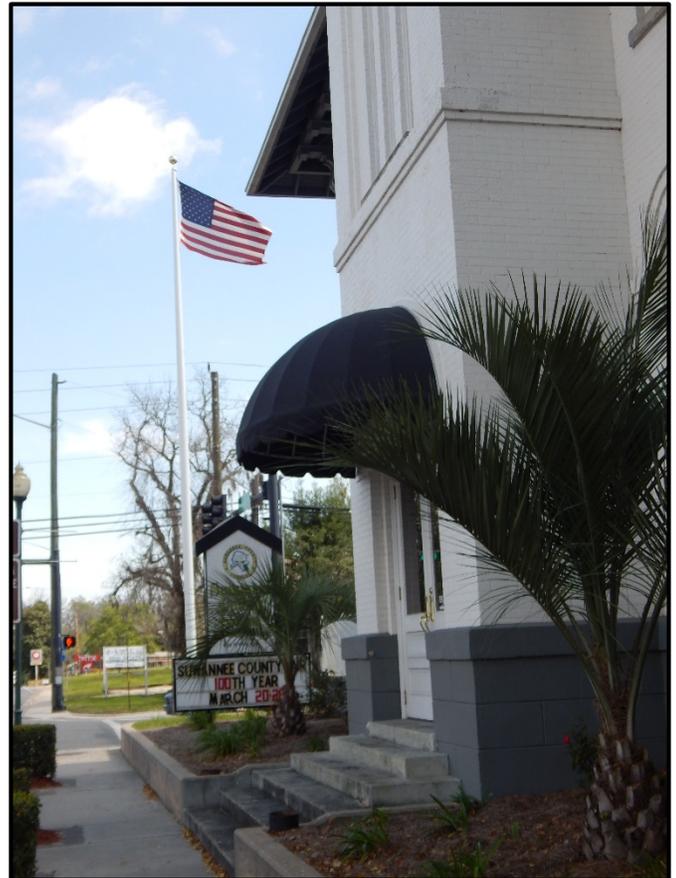
# General Improvements to Historical Property

Our Old City Hall, a designated Historical Resource and Site, located within in the CRA Area, was improved with a new flag pole, costing \$2,762, and new awnings, costing \$1840, for a total of \$4,602.00. This building is the home of our Chamber of Commerce and draws attention to tourists while adding to the historical value of Live Oak.

**Before:**



**After:** (Awnings & Flagpole)



Leading up to the 13-14 fiscal year, an enormous amount of planning and groundwork took place to decide the direction of the CRA. This included CRA Board workshops, outreach and contact with citizens, constituents and business owners, as well as a series of multi-year visioning exercises and reports, and public charrettes. Additionally, Live Oak was selected as one of four communities in the nation to receive a Citizens Institute for Rural Design Award. These workshops were held in the fall of 2013, during this reporting period.

The press release was as follows:

### Wednesday, June 12, 2013 – Citizens' Institute On Rural Design Announces 2013 Awards

**Washington, DC** -- Today the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design (CIRD) announced four organizations selected to host design workshops in rural communities. CIRD workshops bring together local leaders, non-profits, community organizations, and citizens with a team of specialists in design, planning, and creative placemaking to address design challenges identified by the community.

Selected by an advisory panel from a pool of 30 applicants, the four 2013 workshop hosts are:

- **Central Appalachia Institute for Research and Development, Inc.**
- **Rochester Regional Community Design Center**
- **University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Suwannee County Extension**
- **City of Seguin, Texas**

Two of the workshops will address the role design can play in revitalizing declining downtowns: **Lima, New York (pop. 2,137)** will focus on physical improvements and economic development strategies, and **Live Oak, Florida (pop. 6,918)** will focus on redevelopment and rebuilding after a natural disaster. The workshop in **Appalachian Eastern Kentucky (pop. 21,931)** will integrate arts and culture into existing community plans, raising awareness about the potential of artisans and craft industries to serve as an economic engine for a fifty-four county region. The workshop in **Seguin, Texas (pop. 25,674)** will be centered around the design and public health benefits of a new waterfront trail for a low-income community suffering from high rates of obesity and limited options for walking, biking, or transit.

CIRD offers annual competitive funding to as many as four small towns or rural communities to host a two-and-a-half day community design workshop. CIRD awardees receive \$7,000 to support the workshop, in-kind design expertise and technical assistance valued at \$35,000, and additional training through webinars, conference calls, and web-based resources.



The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design (CIRD) is a National Endowment for the Arts leadership initiative in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Project for Public Spaces, Inc., along with the Orton Family Foundation and the CommunityMatters® Partnership. Established in 1991, CIRD has convened more than 60 rural design workshops in all regions of the country, empowering residents to leverage local assets in order to build better places to live, work, and play. **For more information visit [www.rural-design.org](http://www.rural-design.org).**

## Downtown Parks, Heritage Trail & Crosswalk, Helvenston Street & Railroad Avenue Sidewalks & Fencing

Many ideas came forth out of the public visioning workshops which were held. Much of the focus for redevelopment had shifted due to damage and impacts from the June 2012 Tropical Storm Debby, which caused catastrophic flooding and sinkhole damage to the Downtown and other areas in the redevelopment district. Other projects were completed to promote connectivity and safe walkability, as well as to add beauty and functionality to various adjacent areas. All projects required additional planning, engineering and permitting.

The CRA created a new Downtown park and event space area where severely damaged buildings once stood. 'Festival Park' now provides a venue space for much desired downtown entertainment for citizens to enjoy, and has been utilized for our annual Jazz, Arts and Blues Festival, as well as for the July 4<sup>th</sup> Freedom Fest event. The landscaped open space provides year-round opportunities for many other uses, including a weekly farmers market.



**Before/During:** (above & left)

**After:** (below)



## **Downtown Parks, Heritage Trail & Crosswalk, Helvenston Street & Railroad Avenue Sidewalks & Fencing, continued**

### **Heritage Trail:**

Heritage Trail was also completed, transforming a defunct, abandoned railroad bed into a functional 12 foot wide, 2,200 foot long cement trail, which provides connectivity between US-90, near the Downtown, to Helvenston St., near Heritage Park and Gardens.

Additional adjacent sidewalks were also completed, adding 4,650 feet of new sidewalk along Helvenston Street and Railroad Avenue.

A beautiful circular trail-head feature was added at the north side of the trail, along with improved parking areas for users.

The trail also features new landscaping which includes several large Live Oak Trees, cement bulb-outs and other designated features along the trail provide areas for decorative park benches and trashcans, and a new privacy buffer fence along portions of the south end to provide a sense of space and enclosure.

Electrical conduit was also installed to supply future lighting fixtures along the trail. Another major aspect of the construction was improvements for storm-water retention and infrastructure to channel surface water away from the trail to dedicated retention ponds.

Decorative split-rail wood fencing lines all the new trails and sidewalks. A dedicated pedestrian cross-walk from Heritage Trail to the new sidewalks on the south side of Helvenston Street was completed, and the City partnered with the CRA to create a 4-way stop sign at the next intersection to the west in order to help in additional traffic calming.

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A total of \$320,765 was expended to bring all of these projects to fruition.

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Below are before and after pictures of Heritage Trail and the adjacent sidewalks and fencing features:

**Before:** (US-90 – north end)



**After:** (US-90 – north end)



**Before:** (Helvenston St. – south end)



**After:** (Helvenston St. – south end)



**Before:** (Helvenston St. – south end)



**After:** (Helvenston St. – south end – new crosswalk)



**Before:** (Helvenston St. & Lee Ave. – east end of Heritage Park frontage)



**After:** (Helvenston St. & Lee Ave. – east end of Heritage Park frontage – new sidewalk)



**Before:** (Railroad Ave. – west end of Heritage Park frontage)



**After:** (Railroad Ave. – west end of Heritage Park frontage – new fence & sidewalk)



**Before:** (Railroad Ave. – Heritage Park frontage)



**After:** (Railroad Ave. – Heritage Park frontage – new fence & sidewalk)



## Historic Clock and LED Sign Monument

Getting information to our citizens about downtown events and festivals along with meeting times and dates has improved due to the installation of an LED message center sign. In order to prepare the site, demolition of a blighted tree and brick wall was necessary. Electric work was needed, as well as engineering. This is a multi-year project. The final design will include a monument surround with an appealing faux brick and stucco surrounded. Additionally, a historic large-dial clock feature will also be included in the design. The clock was purchased during this reporting period, but will be installed in conjunction with the monument work anticipated to be completed during the 14-15 fiscal year. Project costs for the 13-14 period totaled \$69,028.

### Before/During:



### New LED Sign:





## US-90 East Parking Lot

Safe and accessible downtown parking is always a necessary component that at times can be in short supply. The CRA funded a project to bring a blighted public lot back life by addressing deficiencies in the surface, vehicle stops, and striping, including ADA compliance. Total project costs were \$4,320.



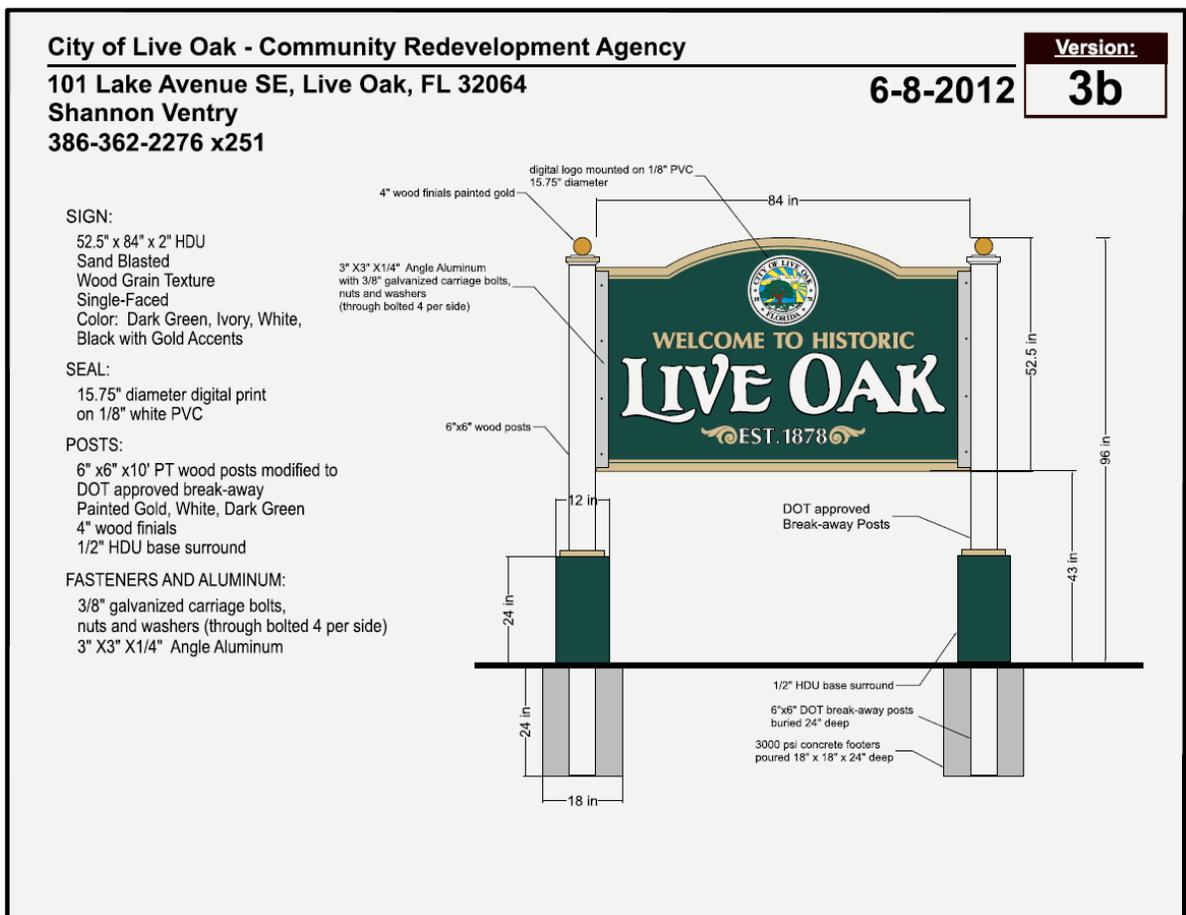
# Welcome Signs

Welcome signs for the City had been budgeted for over the preceding fiscal years, but staff vacancies had caused additional delay. There was also a substantial and lengthy permit process with the Department of Transportation, due to the fact that they were proposed to be located in state highway right-of-ways. Design voting and committee selections, color and font choices, materials and size/height, best visibility locations, surveying, planning and engineering were all part of the process. Additionally, inter-local and maintenance agreements were needed with Suwannee County as well as the Department of Transportation.

All the necessary pieces of the puzzle came together and 5 new welcome signs were completed at all the main entrances to the City, along the major state highways.

Total project costs for the 5 new signs was \$32,850.

## Final Design Concept:



**Final Installed Signs:**



Other actual expenditures not specified under Program or Project Activities are as follows:

• Community Policing	-	\$13,438
• Training Seminars & FRA Conference Attendance	-	\$7,955
• Insurance	-	\$14,324
• Regular Salary	-	\$33,538
• FICA/Med Tax Contributions	-	\$2,526
• Retirement Contributions	-	\$2,346
• Life & Health Insurance Contributions	-	\$6,872
• Worker's Compensation	-	\$63
• Legal Fees for Board Attorney	-	\$5,016
• Contracted Services, Copier & Utilities - portion (Shared with other Annex Building Departments)	-	\$4,640
• Legal Advertising	-	\$2,886
• FRA and DEO Memberships	-	\$795

## Detail Trail Balance Sheet

PREPARED 03/30/2015, 16:42:08 PROGRAM: GM257U CITY OF LIVE OAK		2014 TRIAL BALANCE AS OF 09/30/2014	PAGE 1 ACCOUNTING PERIOD 13/2014
FUND 661 TIFF-COMM.REDEV.TRUST	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	DEBIT BALANCE	CREDIT BALANCE
101 10 00	CASH/INVESTMENTS / REDEV.TAX INCREMENT	425,331.11	
115 02 00	A/R / MISC.	4,000.00	
115 05 00	A/R / ADVANCE TRAVEL	2,062.08	
131 01 00	OTHER FUND / GENERAL	250.00	
133 00 00	DUE FROM / OTHER GOV'T	835.00	
155 10 00	PREPAID / PREPAID ITEM	5,459.00	
172 00 00	OTHER ASSETS / REVENUE CONTROL		432,036.15
201 00 00	DUE TO / ACCOUNTS PAYABLE		2,731.90
223 01 00	DEFERRED / REVENUE		6,041.00
242 00 00	LIABILITY / EXPENDITURE CONTROL	670,668.05	
247 04 00	F/B RESERVE / TIF		580,231.98
271 00 00	EQUITY / UNRESERVED FUND BALANCE		87,564.21
	FUND TOTALS	----- 1,108,605.24	----- 1,108,605.24
	FUND IS IN BALANCE		

# Questions & Comments

*We are here to serve you!*

*If you have any questions, comments or ideas - please do not hesitate to give us a call or stop by our offices.*

**Kim Smiley: Community Redevelopment Agency Project Specialist**

**George Curtis Director: Director of Planning & Zoning/Development Manager**

## Live Oak CRA

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