

STRUCTURES AWARDS

COMMUNITY IMPACT: WINNER

RIVIERA BEACH HEIGHTS COMMUNITY GARDEN & LINEAR PARK

**Riviera Beach Community
Redevelopment Agency**
www.rbcra.com
1010 W. 10th St., Riviera Beach 33404
(561) 844-3408

KEY PARTNERS

Architect/interior designer:
Song + Associates
General contractor: All-Site Construction
Marketing team: O'Donnell Agency

The Riviera Beach Linear Park & Community Garden effort stands out among other local civic projects by virtue of a simple vision: planners reimagined and re-engineered community liabilities into community assets.

Its history speaks volumes about what planners faced. The linear park started out many years ago as an open ditch later replaced with a huge drainage pipe that proved ineffective for street flooding in heavy rains. Residents and schoolchildren used it as a walking path. It became a weed-choked lot and graveyard for construction debris.



Working with its partners, including architect Song + Associates, the Riviera Beach CRA transformed the area by first listening to resident concerns, engag-

ing various partners and stakeholders, leveraging resources and incorporating design.

Utilizing principles for landscape

design and construction outlined by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Extension called xeriscaping, the plan called for novel adoptions including a shipping container transformed to house the tool shed, office and restroom; rainwater collection for irrigation; energy-efficient LED lights for sidewalk lighting; shaded trellises for shade to lowlight plants; a health trail; a camera system monitored by police; and reimagined benches rescued and restored from a nearby demolition.

Most of the homeowners along the linear park took advantage of the Riviera Beach CRA's House of Distinction Program and are receiving improvements up to \$20,000 for items like new roofs, driveways, exterior painting, new doors and windows, landscaping, and irrigation. For both projects, the CRA placed an emphasis on local, minority and small business participation.

Almost six years ago, the community challenged the CRA to provide some focus to the city's mainland neighborhoods. The result is what those in the city call the Riviera Beach Heights Implementation Plan's part in the city's Year of Transformation.