



## ***My Community***

### **What is My Community?**

The “My Community” Student Project documents the redevelopment in Lake Wales. Students from McLaughlin Middle School will be able to collaborate with City Officials, legislators, law enforcement officers, developers, and community leaders. Students will work on this project from August to December of 2021. After the determined final redevelopment project is completed, students and school staff (along with the help of City Staff) will form the footage they recorded into a documentary.

### **What is the Goal of “My Community?”**

The goal is for students to document the re-development of a community plagued with blight, low economic development, lack of affordable housing, and criminal activity. Students will get a behind the scenes look at what it takes to help revitalize a community. More importantly, the student’s diversity will help promote the vision of their different neighborhoods while strengthening their knowledge and helping them take ownership of their future in Lake Wales. This will allow students to breakdown any racial, social, or economic barriers in communities across the City.

### **Intended Audience**

The target age for this project is students between 10-14 years old. The goal is to have students who live in Lake Wales city limits. All participating students should have the zip code of 33853. Students who want to participate but live outside of the city limits or have another zip code shall be allowed to participate on a case by case basis.

### **Project Duties**

- Producing
- Directing
- Editing
- Camera
- Lighting
- Production Sound
- Interviewing



### **The Role of Partners:**

CRA Staff – Staff members will plan projects, arrange meetings, coordinate with students, partners, and community members.

- Meetings/activities for the students will be planned at least two weeks in advance. Special meetings inside of two weeks needs approval by CRA Staff/McLaughlin Middle School administration.

Law Enforcement – Partner with students and City staff to strengthen community awareness, community engagement, community relations.

Code Enforcement – Partner with students and City staff to strengthen community awareness, community engagement, community relations.

Building – Take students /City Staff on construction site tours of current redevelopment

Community Leaders – Coordinate with students /City Staff with meetings, events, and special projects.

School Staff – Provide students with technology, oversight, guidance, and time management needed to participate in My Community project.

### **Student Tasks**

- To set the stage, students will document the history of the Northwest Neighborhood.
  - What were the demographics of the community and how has it evolved to its current status?
  - How has housing and economic development changed over the years?
  - How has public safety changed over the years?
- Students will then document the plans for redevelopment in the City based on the CRA Plan and Lake Wales Connected. Lake Wales Connected is a plan
- Students will then start attending planning meetings and construction throughout the Northwest Neighborhood
  - During the planning meetings students will documents specific steps that are taken to help bring Affordable Housing or Economic Development to the Northwest Neighborhood.
  - Students will document the actual construction work being done in the community to meet the goals spelled out in the CRA Plan and/or Lake Wales Connect.
- The students will then compile all filmed footage and (with the help of school staff) create a series.
- It is the goal that students attend and document meetings, events, or any other community activity at least once a week.

The project is broken down into three main areas of focus: Housing Development, Economic Development, and Public Safety.



Housing Development– Students will document how affordable housing plays a key role in redevelopment. They will interview developers, individuals buying property, City officials (CRA, Code Compliance, Planning, and Building) and community partners. Students will have the chance to work with CRA staff in identifying eligible candidates for funding for housing rehabilitation projects. The following are some takeaways the students will have under the Affordable Housing area. The goal is for students to get a clear understanding of how much work is put into redeveloping a neighborhood. Students will document areas such as:

- Construction
- Housing Rehabilitation
- Land Acquisition
- Neighborhood Façade
- Blight
- Demolition

Economic/Business Development - Students will document how Economic/Business Development plays a key role in redevelopment. They will interview business owners, potential business owners, and financial partners in order to get an in-depth look at business planning and negotiation. Students will document areas such as:

- Land Acquisition
- Building renovation
- Business Start-up
- Public improvement

Public Safety - Students will document how Public Safety plays a major role in redevelopment. Students will work with law enforcement to understand how Public Safety benefits their community. Students will take part in:

- Ride along
- Public safety meetings
- Community events

### **Final Paper/Presentation**

- Students will write a paper on what they learned in the project and how they can apply the experience to their own community. LWHS will provide criteria/guidelines for the paper.
- Students will compile all video and notes taken from the project and present it at the end of each semester. (The presentation could be for their class or for the entire school)
  - o The goal would be to present every semester and then compile all of the video over a specific time period and then make it into movie.