

April 23, 2004

Mr. Bob Gernert, Chairman  
Visioning Steering Committee  
c/o Winter Haven Chamber of Commerce  
P.O. Box 1420  
Winter Haven, FL 33882-1420

Re: City Activities in Achieving the Community Visioning Plan

Dear Bob:

On behalf of the City Commission and the City's 500 plus employees, it is my pleasure to update you on the progress made this past year to achieve the community's Vision by offering the enclosed stakeholders' report.

As can be seen from the report, significant progress continues. A number of programs and projects have been accomplished and over the next several months, many more will transition from planning and design to implementation and construction. In time our citizens, visitors and businesses will see increasing evidence of the community vision becoming a reality!

We are grateful for the continued support of our City Commission and members of this community in making this possible. With active participation from all segments of our community, we will succeed in creating a beautiful and progressive city in which to live, work, play and reflect upon with pride.

Sincerely,

David L. Greene  
City Manager

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cc: City Commissioners  
Community Visioning Committee Members  
Department Directors

**City of Winter Haven  
“Our Future by Design”  
A Stakeholders’ Report  
For the Period of March 2003 to March 2004**

**Prepared by  
Michele Stayner, Community & Workforce Services’ Director**



**Mike Easterling, Mayor  
Yvonne Brooks, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Nat Birdsong, Commissioner  
Charles Cone, Commissioner  
Jeff Potter, Commissioner**

**David L. Greene, City Manager  
Dale L. Smith, Assistant City Manager  
Barbara McKenzie, City Clerk  
John Murphy, City Attorney**

**Cal Bowen, Finance and Support Services’ Director  
Pete Chichetto, Development Services’ Director  
Paul Goward, Police Chief  
Tony Jackson, Fire Chief  
Hiep Nguyen, Technology Services’ Director  
Michael Stavres, Leisure and Environmental Services’ Director  
Tony Viola, Utilities and Engineering Services’ Director  
Wes Waddell, Public Services’ Director**

**April, 2004**

## **City of Winter Haven “Our Future by Design” - A Stakeholders’ Report**

As a companion stakeholder in “Our Future by Design,” the City of Winter Haven offers this document as a demonstration of our continuing commitment toward fostering a spirit of public trust and high cooperation to achieve mutually beneficial results. The City is dedicated to working with others to collectively establish a harmonious community of beauty that embraces diversity while nurturing and promoting growth, economic development and quality of life for our citizens and visitors. This report categorizes and summarizes community visionary strategic considerations, and contains a non-prioritized list of action steps taken by the City this past year to accomplish the hopes, dreams, goals and objectives of our greater Winter Haven community.

### **Community**

#### ***Neighborhoods***

*Vision Summary* – develop an effective system of neighborhood associations for the purpose of promoting volunteerism to pro-actively address safety, code enforcement, beautification and related concerns; establish agreements with local public agencies for the purpose of providing support and education for neighborhood participants; develop and maintain a community web-site to facilitate communications and the exchange of information among partnering groups.

#### *Action Steps Taken* –

- Held 44 neighborhood meetings.
- Developed an information packet to describe procedures and promote the benefits of neighborhood organization.
- Organized one new neighborhood group.
- Participated in/organized six neighborhood clean-up activities.
- Created and sought Planning Commission approval of a neighborhood comprehensive plan element. The element is to be presented to the City Commission in April.
- Prepared four specific plans in draft form for the Lake Howard, Lake Martha, Lake Idyl and Southeast neighborhoods.
- Developed the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program in draft form to present to the City Commission in May.
- Introduced the new service action form and telephone line system to employees.
- Provided a landlord/tenant information workshop; 70+ participated in the Saturday activity held in January.
- Continuing the development of a data base to enhance our ability to communicate more effectively with neighborhood groups.
- The document management system for the City Clerk was updated to provide streamlined access to digitalized public records.

- An internal web-based information portal called the Winter Haven Intranet Information Portal (W.H.I.I.P.) was developed to promote the sharing of information within the City.
- Currently updating the City's web-site format to streamline access and use.
- An on-line message board with forums is up and running.

### ***Recreation and Culture***

*Vision Summary* – examine current resources, community needs, and obtain the funding required to develop and enhance accessibility to innovative recreation and cultural opportunities that define us as a community, provide avenues for communication, and stimulate our intellectual and physical energies; improve and expand neighborhood parks and facilities; expand competitive and non-competitive youth sports activities; build a centralized state-of-the art lakefront facility; and establish a permanent exhibit featuring local history and art, representative of the various community cultures.

### *Action Steps Taken* –

- Leisure Services' Facility and Program Use (For the year ending December 31, 2003)
  - Facility rentals – 1,871 with 182,353 attendees
  - Athletic venue rentals – 45 with 1,304 teams participating
  - Aquatic operations – 16,245 daily swim participants, excluding summer youth program, Sting Ray swim team, and high school swim team attendance.
  - Instructional classes – 2,302 with 12,944 attendees
  - Athletic leagues – 8,630 participants
  - Willowbrook – 55,459 rounds of golf
  - Summer camp program – 477 attendees
  - After-school program – 248 attendees
  - Library –
    - Patronage - 21,691 with borrower cards
      - 199,599 daily visitors
      - 23 adult programs with 430 participants
      - 119 children's programs with 3,268 attendees
    - Services - 291,387 circulations
      - 38,187 reference questions answered
      - 1,258 materials borrowed via the inter-library loan
- Staff is preparing a proposal for a recreation activity membership program to help address inequity in the distribution of capital costs.
- Staff has developed and submitted a reciprocal facility use agreement to the Polk County School Board.
- Neighborhood Park and Facility expansion was addressed as follows:

Heritage Park/Woman's Club Building - all remaining windows and the gutter system were repaired.

Lake Maude Properties – it was determined the property could not meet the recreation needs as originally planned; the property has been split into two tracts. The 29-acre site directly across from DiamondPlex Softball facility is targeted to be affordable housing, and the 7-acre tract located lakeside is planned to become a nature park.

Library (New) - construction is nearly complete with the facility targeted to open in June.

Winter Haven Recreation & Cultural Center - plans are underway for the two-phased renovation of the playground area located directly behind the building. The second project will involve renovating the existing swimming pool. CDBG dollars may be used to fund a portion of this project.

Kiwanis Park - plans are being developed and funding is being sought for new playground equipment.

Roe Park (Lake Shipp Park) – staff is working with Polk County representatives to transfer the park from the County to the City.

Sertoma Park - renewed a 50-year lease agreement for Sertoma Park, and completed common area improvements at this site.

Sportsman's Park – park improvements are complete; plants, sidewalks, and new playground equipment were installed; a community activity and park rededication day was held on March 20.

Rails-to-Trails (aka Chain O'Lakes Trail) - Work continues with the design of the Chain O'Lakes Trail extending from Avenue B, NW to Lake Echo in Lake Alfred. Construction documents should be received late spring/early summer and bids will be distributed immediately thereafter.

Chain O'Lakes Convention Center - completed the Chain O'Lakes energy conservation project and made HVAC system control program adjustments; however, cost savings have yet to be conclusively determined.

Other New Facilities - Continuing efforts to seek out property to accommodate current needs including youth athletic fields (baseball, softball, football, soccer); tennis facilities; outdoor basketball courts; alternative sports (skate park); and shuffleboard. Received approval to execute a purchase contract with George Corbett for the purchase of 100 acres in east Winter Haven; however, based on SWFWMD documents, the final property appraisal and completion of an on-site

assessment by staff, it was decided the property would not be purchased for recreation development.

- Hosted 51 special events in 2003; an estimated 49,250 people attended the high visibility community strengthening activities. Re-implemented monthly T.G.I.F. events and held a holiday downtown sashay to promote downtown activity.
- Leisure and Environmental Services' staff developed the Youth Sports Council that meets monthly to discuss upcoming plans for youth sports. This group has been active in promoting communication among a variety of leagues; establishing a fund raising partnership with the Cleveland Indians; and implementing a capital improvement request program.
- Staff is formulating a new user agreement for youth sports leagues.
- A Youth Recreation Fund has been created to allow for scholarships for youth recreation programs and supply purchases.
- Received permission from the Jewett Middle School principal and PE coach to develop a youth football practice field at the school. The project will begin once funding is identified for the purchase of goal posts, irrigation, and sod/sprigs.
- Youth football and cheerleading programs were added to the Police Athletic League program.
- Earl Williams was reclassified as Recreation Supervisor III - Cultural Arts Supervisor responsible for introducing cultural arts (art, music, theater, and dance) to community youth.
- Publication of the Opportunities brochure includes Theatre Winter Haven and Ridge Art Association information and production/show schedules.
- Theatre Winter Haven presented five main stage productions.
- The Ridge Art Association presented eight exhibitions.
- The City purchased six acres of property on Lake Hartridge for a stormwater quality improvement project. A large component of the project will be to construct a walking trail, boardwalk, picnic pavilions and restrooms at the site. Construction is scheduled to begin June 2005.

### ***Community Beautification***

*Vision Summary* – through education, the development of beautification plans and design standards, strengthened effective code enforcement and regular clean-up efforts, inspire community pride and empower citizens to take a greater responsibility for litter prevention, neighborhood beautification, and minimizing the impact of waste; to enhance the aesthetics of public entrances and gateways, residential neighborhoods, and commercial buildings and grounds, as well as establish a means to reduce noise and visual clutter to project a more attractive, positive image of our community identity.

#### *Action Steps Taken* –

- Demolished 26 sub-standard structures.
- Streamlined code enforcement procedures and forms; laptops for officer field use have been provided.

- Exploring a proposal for implementing a special master code enforcement system versus a code enforcement board system.
- Review of a towing ordinance and adoption of the International Code is underway.
- Achieving code compliance more swiftly with the implementation of a courtesy green door tag notice system.
- Solicited vendor assistance in resolving the issue of abandoned shopping carts.
- Solicited vendor assistance in resolving the issue of grass clippings being blown into the rights-of-way.
- Participated in/organized six neighborhood clean-up activities.
- Prepared four specific plans in draft form for the Lake Howard, Lake Martha, Lake Idyl and Southeast neighborhoods.
- Developed the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program in draft form to present to the City Commission in May.
- Introduced the new service action form and telephone line system to employees to provide a means to engage them in our beautification and clean-up effort.
- Provided a landlord/tenant information workshop; 70+ participated in the Saturday activity held in January.
- Resurfaced six roads at a cost of \$211,000.
- The Cypress Gardens Boulevard Landscape Project valued at \$104,177 was completed.
- The replacement of soil and installation of 2,031 new ornamental plants along the US Highway 17 overpass was completed.
- The \$132,097 Havendale Boulevard Landscape Project was completed.
- Acquired and demolished the Ford Auto Trim Building at the intersection of 5<sup>th</sup> Street, SW and the US 17 cross-over; a landscape improvement project is now complete.
- Avenue T improvement project plans are nearly 90% complete and project funding is being secured.
- Completed the Winter Haven Industrial Park and Distribution Center entryway beautification project through a partnership with the park's businesses. The project consists of the installation of a new entryway sign and significant landscape upgrades. City crews were responsible for installing the plants, irrigation and electric services, and will subsequently maintain the new signage and landscape. Business park owners contributed \$15,000 for the new sign and landscape materials.
- Staff cleaned off approximately 2,500 feet of lakeshore and maintained another 9,000 feet of lakeshore at the primary City entrance ways.
- The City received \$15,000 to revise our tree board ordinance and tree management plan. Tree Board members assisted staff with selecting GAI Consultants to perform this task which is expected to be complete in September, 2003. Once complete, the tree management plan will be incorporated in our landscape regulations and used as a guide for individuals seeking to remove existing trees.

## **Tolerance**

Vision Summary – promote dialogue, interaction, sensitivity, tolerance, and respect among diverse groups of people, in an effort to achieve harmony and understanding essential for effecting change and implementing our community vision.

### Action Steps Taken -

- Focus on Leadership participation promoted within the workplace; sponsored two employees in this program.
- CDC Board appointment of employee.
- NAACP banquet participation.
- Hosted and cosponsored the Chamber of Commerce Leadership Group.
- Engaged in a staff Swap Day with City of Auburndale.
- Provided a landlord/tenant information workshop; 70+ participated in the Saturday activity held in January.
- Engaged staff in the Polk Vision, Inc. effort and committed to being a corporate sponsor by making a \$5,000 contribution to this cause this fiscal year.
- 15 in 5 Strategic Initiative introduced. Task force accomplishments include:
  - Strategy's* creation of vision, mission, core values and employee pledge statements.
  - Marketing's* development of a "15 in 5" logo, the installation of computer kiosks in City work areas, and the ongoing study of innovative approaches to marketing the City.
  - Business Processes* centralizing of City units and processes related to grant funding, purchasing, and accounting; exploring prime uses for the vacated Police Department to centralize operations and establish a one-stop shop; Solid Waste fee schedule adjustments and leisure program rate adjustments have been implemented; technology service enhancements; cell phone and vehicle costs savings endeavors; and implementation of the service action telephone line and request form.
  - Human Resources'* improved communications through the CityFax redesign; expansion of the education incentive/employee service awards programs; expansion of management training opportunities; HR automation underway; a new HR orientation program and pay for performance plan under development; redesign of all job descriptions for consistency of format; salary compression study results implemented; improved job classification system and risk management awareness.

## **Economic Development**

Vision Summary – while maintaining and promoting our area's unique physical assets and superior quality of life, and through the combined efforts of community leaders, expand and diversify our economic base by accomplishing the following not all inclusive list of activities:

- Enhance existing businesses.
- Develop a vibrant, thriving downtown that provides broad business and varied social and artistic opportunities.
- Capitalize on our geographic location between Tampa and Orlando to attract environmentally friendly and diverse businesses to our area, placing particular emphasis upon attracting information and technology driven businesses that will provide higher caliber, better paying jobs.
- Promote and encourage growth and expansion of our existing economic drivers, emphasizing medicine, tourism, and sports activities and maximizing sports marketing opportunities.
- Coordinate and align our local education infrastructure and technology with varied employer needs.
- Establish and maintain public/private partnerships, mutually beneficial communications, and cooperative efforts to facilitate growth and expansion, share financial responsibility, plan for the future, and market the benefits obtained through city growth and annexation.
- Strategically position the City of Winter Haven to participate in the economic growth along the U.S. 27 corridor.
- Examine and assess the economic impact of Major League Baseball on our community, and investigate alternative funding sources to defray the cost should this activity remain.
- Formulate a viable contingency plan for economic development should professional baseball not be retained in the community.
- Seek a trained and educated workforce, and provide the infrastructure and technology necessary to facilitate adapting to our future and building on our strengths.

#### Action Steps Taken –

- New businesses in the area - Home Depot, Walgreens, Family Dollar, Longhorn, Pier I, AmSouth Banks (2), and Carrabbas
- Businesses renovated - Blockbuster
- Met with Cleveland Indians representatives to discuss current agreement modifications and opportunities for the equal partnership funding of a new facility located closer to US Highway 27.
- Met with Indians, Baltimore Orioles and the Florida Grapefruit League to discuss opportunities for a two-team venue.
- Engaging in preliminary discussions with TECO concerning renewal of their franchise agreement scheduled to expire in 2005.
- Discussions with Reliant Energy regarding their Memorandum of Understanding are temporarily on hold.
- Created the Downtown Marketing Support Team to assist with marketing downtown business during construction and promoting the City among business

owners and the public. The team consists of representatives from the City, Main Street and the Chamber of Commerce.

- In partnership with Lake Region High School students, the Downtown Marketing Support Team conducted a survey to collect information concerning shopping habits.
- Business Park Development – communications about the design and construction of a commercial/business park to be located on the north side of the airfield are ongoing with a developer. Staff is currently working with the developer in order to integrate the proposed design with the current design shown in the Master Plan Report. The new business park is expected to encompass 15 acres of vacant land and include approximately 350,000 square feet of office/warehouse space and will generate additional revenues for the City.
- A new Information Technology Director was hired in June 2003.
- The July 2003 reorganization established the Office of Technology Services, emphasizing the organizational need for a strong centralized technology structure.
- Immediate and long-term technology needs of the City have been addressed by introducing an Information Technology Plan.
- Issued patrol officers laptops and wireless modems to allow them the capability of accessing state and national law enforcement databases from their vehicles.
- Purchased an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software package to replace legacy software and allow for the integration of data.
- Six new network servers were installed.
- Constructing a wireless bridged network to increase access speeds for remote work sites.
- The Technology Services' Director is actively engaged in a community and business leader technology forum.
- A total of 23 news businesses opened downtown.
- The City's Technical Review Committee (TRC) reviewed 36 site plans. The plans reviewed include four new subdivisions with a total of 243 new residential lots that will be under construction this year.

### **Education**

*Vision Summary* – have a customized, nationally-recognized, and quality education system that capitalizes on available resources, technology and diversity necessary to provide the knowledge, skills and opportunities that promote lifelong learning; ensure that our education system is led by innovative and dedicated personnel who are highly valued, accountable, and adequately compensated; ensure that schools identify and accommodate the special needs of each student; have a computer with Internet access in every home in the Greater Winter Haven area; enhance communications and promote active learning; and encourage the use of community centers to complement the school system whenever possible in fulfilling educational, recreational, social and health needs.

### Action Steps Taken –

- Provided 23 adult programs and 119 children’s programs at the Library; 3,698 participated in these programs.
- The new Library will have 70+ computers.
- Submitted a reciprocal facility use agreement to the Polk County School Board in December 2003.
- 15 in 5 Strategic Initiative introduced. Task force accomplishments include:
  - Strategy’s* creation of vision, mission, core values and employee pledge statements.
  - Marketing’s* development of a “15 in 5” logo, the planned installation of computer kiosks in City work areas, and the ongoing study of innovative approaches to marketing the City.
  - Business Processes* centralizing of City units and processes related to grant funding, purchasing, and accounting; exploring prime uses for the vacated Police Department to centralize operations and establish a one-stop shop; Solid Waste fee schedule adjustments and leisure program rate adjustments have been implemented; technology service enhancements; cell phone and vehicle costs savings endeavors; and implementation of the service action telephone line and request form.
  - Human Resources’* improved communications through the CityFax redesign; expansion of the education incentive/employee service awards programs; expansion of management training opportunities; HR automation underway; a new HR orientation program and pay for performance plan under development; redesign of all job descriptions for consistency of format; salary compression study results implemented; improved job classification system and risk management awareness.

## **Growth and Redevelopment**

### ***Downtown***

*Vision Summary –* revitalize the downtown area, in a distinguished versus ordinary manner, to restore the self-image, spirit, and economic viability of the community, as well as serve as a catalyst for growth in other areas; ensure that zoning is sensitive to mixed use, parking, setback requirements, etc. in this area; develop a downtown design strategy to promote building design compatibility; develop tax and economic incentives for encouraging downtown investment; and promote quality housing on upper floors of commercial buildings.

### Action Steps Taken –

- Created a partnership with Main Street and initiated the first phase of developing city-wide design standards; it is nearly complete. A preliminary review of the standard occurred recently and staff participated.

- The new Library construction is expected to be complete by the end of April with opening of the facility anticipated to occur in June.
- WHAT terminal site – a temporary site in the vicinity of City Hall was selected; the required sidewalk and ramp construction work was completed by staff; and the relocation of the terminal occurred on April 5.
- Installation of a new Central Avenue water line was completed in December 2003; new line service connections are complete.
- Reconstruction of the sidewalks surrounding Central Park and 4<sup>th</sup> Street, from Avenue A, SW to Central Avenue, was finalized in December 2003.
- Work on Central Avenue sidewalks, from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> streets and 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> streets, is underway.
- The target date for completing the Central Avenue/Central Park improvement project is August 2004.
- Created the Downtown Marketing Support Team to facilitate and promote continued business during construction; effectively created, funded and displayed DUSTY logo information signs, parking availability and business entrance signs.
- Regularly prepare construction updates and hand deliver them to downtown businesses to keep them informed of our progress.
- Providing construction and downtown shopping benefit educational materials to include implementing a construction website link; placing ads and promotions in local newspapers; and making presentations to area clubs and organizations.
- Work continues on the design of the Chain O'Lakes Trail extending from Avenue B, NW to Lake Echo in Lake Alfred. Construction documents should be received in the next 90 days and bids will be distributed immediately thereafter.

### ***Historic Preservation***

Vision Summary – preserve, enhance, publicize, and promote the revitalization of historic residential and commercial structures; encourage and provide a means for appreciating historic heritage; adopt a historic preservation ordinance and work with the county to adopt ad valorem tax abatement programs for the restoration of qualifying historic sites; establish a grant program for qualified owners of historic residence; encourage the city to support a historical museum; adopt a historic structure designation plaque or marker program; and develop historic building visitor guides, brochures and tours.

### ***Action Steps Taken*** –

- Winter Haven Women's Club Historic preservation work continues. All remaining windows and the gutter system were repaired. The City has applied to the Florida Historical Commission for \$170,983 in grant funds to complete urgent and necessary repairs, and to conduct an intensive structural assessment as a preliminary step in drafting rehabilitation plans and proposals. The objective of the City and Historic Winter Haven, Inc. is to undertake major rehabilitation of all parts of this building.

- Black History Month celebration at the Winter Haven Recreation and Cultural Center.
- Heritage Day celebration was held at Tugerson Field (Winter Haven Recreation and Cultural Center).
- In July, 2003, the City applied to the U.S. Administrator of General Services to secure the transfer of the old Post Office located at 98 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, SW. The City has since acquired the facility with the conditional leasing of the building back to the USDA for a five year period at the rate of \$7,640 per month, with an automatic 3% annual increase. After the lease with the USDA has expired, the City can use the building as it sees fit provided its historic character is maintained.

### ***Transportation***

*Vision Summary* – pro-actively maintain our infrastructure and transportation system; explore and develop alternative transportation corridors and creative inter-city and county modes of transportation (e.g. sidewalks/bike lanes/boats/other) that are sensitive to our unique lake-centered environment and the beautification of our community; enact lake-sensitive ordinances with regard to transportation; and promote the viability of the Winter Haven Area Transit.

### *Action Steps Taken* –

- Resurfaced six roads at a cost of \$211,000. The resurfaced roads include:  
     Lake Elbert Drive East from Funnyting to SR 542  
     Avenue M, NW from 16<sup>th</sup> Street West to Lake Cannon Drive  
     East Lake Cannon Drive from 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW to the loop  
     Lake & Golf Estates (Winslow & Briarwood)  
     Brookhaven (Lollybay Loop)  
     Stonebridge (Kings Crossing)
- The Cypress Gardens Boulevard Landscape Project valued at \$104,177 was completed.
- The replacement of soil and installation of 2,031 new ornamental plants along the US Highway 17 overpass was completed.
- The \$132,097 Havendale Boulevard Landscape Project was completed.
- Acquired and demolished the Ford Auto Trim Building at the intersection of 5<sup>th</sup> Street, SW and the US 17 cross-over; a landscape improvement project is now complete.
- Avenue T improvement project plans are nearly 90% complete and project funding is being secured.
- Master Plan Update – PBSJ consultants are in the final stages of completing the Airport's Master Plan Update. The technical advisory committee reviewed three development concepts for the 20-year plan and collectively chose design alternative three. Alternative three illustrates development in all available land areas and includes land acquisition to the southeast side of the existing property.

This alternative also includes the construction of 55 hangars, a longer runway and a new north terminal.

- Business Park Development – communications about the design and construction of a commercial/business park to be located on the north side of the airfield are ongoing with a developer. Staff is currently working with the developer in order to integrate the proposed design with the current design shown in the Master Plan Report. The new business park is expected to encompass 15 acres of vacant land and include approximately 350,000 square feet of office/warehouse space and will generate additional revenues for the City.
- North Terminal Design – Staff is working with PBSJ consultants on the scope for the design of a new North Terminal Facility. The new 10,000 sq. ft. facility will have a restaurant, retail space, large restrooms, and more space for the FBO and Airport Administrative functions. The project also includes the design of a new entrance road, parking facility and landscaping. The total estimated cost of the facility is projected at \$4 million.
- WHAT funding of \$60,000, and the provision of staff and services to facilitate relocation of their terminal site.
- Lake Shipp Sidewalk project proposal – numerous staff hours were devoted to exploring a resident generated proposal to construct a sidewalk in this area; staff identified areas where right-of-way would be required and approached property owners for necessary easements. Some property owner's were opposed to granting the necessary easements. At a neighborhood meeting on March 16, 2003, the majority agreed not to proceed with the sidewalk construction proposal.
- Lake Howard Sidewalk project proposal - survey work on the east side of Lake Howard has been performed for the planned sidewalk project. Options for performing the design work are being considered and funding is still available for this project.
- Lake Elbert Sidewalk project proposal (Lake Elbert Trail) – staff is prepared to partner with the Chamber of Commerce and others to resurrect the concept and seek funding for any desired construction.

## ***Growth***

*Vision Summary* – actively develop and sustain our community in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner, without sacrificing our uniqueness, dynamics and beauty.

### *Action Steps Taken* –

- Annexed an additional 1,005 acres; expanded the city limits to 18,583 acres or 29.04 square miles.
- Increased tax base value by \$4,850,320 resulting in a \$36,100 increase in ad-valorem tax revenue.
- Promoted annexation via Commission fact sheets and public forum presentations.

- Working closely with County personnel to create a team effort to provide a plan for future water usage in Polk County.
- Renewing the City's consumptive use permit with SWFWMD. The Winter Haven and Garden Grove systems are being combined into one permit. Upon consolidating these permits, the process of injecting fluoride into the Garden Grove water system will be implemented, and the systems will be physically interconnected to increase reliability, system pressure and fire protection.
- Considering the development of city-wide plans to address lead and copper sampling, bacteriological sampling and corrosion control.
- Creating a 20-year water/wastewater master plan to address issues such as growth; plant consolidation; alternative water sources; franchise service area expansion; staffing; grant and loan funding sources; regulatory treatment and disposal requirements; and reuse.
- Considering implementation of a water rate structure that encourages conservation and discourages overindulgence.
- Working closely with all regulatory agencies that create, implement and monitor policies dealing with phases of water withdrawal, treatment and disposal.
- Proceeding with vulnerability assessments and developing emergency operations plans for the Winter Haven and Garden Grove water systems.
- Construction of the new Winter Haven Police Department building was completed, and staff relocated to the new facility in July.
- The vacated Police Department will soon house finance, accounting, cash collections, customer services, building, human resources, and technology service operations and staff; renovations are targeted for completion in late 2004.
- Opened Fire Station #3 to provide citizens in the southeast area the benefit of more responsive service.
- Issued an RFQ for the sale of the soon to be vacated Library, and exploring alternative strategies for marketing the sale of this property.
- Streets' division staff constructed a facility at the Motor Pool to accommodate centralizing Public Services' Department employees in one area.
- The City's Technical Review Committee (TRC) reviewed 36 site plans. The plans reviewed include four new subdivisions with a total of 243 new residential lots that will be under construction this year.
- Approximately 4,000 single family residential units have either been approved or are in the planning stages. The majority of these new units will be situated in the southeast portion of the City, and all units will be completely developed in five to ten years.

### ***Neighborhood Revitalization***

*Vision Summary* – support and revitalize our neighborhoods, through public/private partnership efforts, to attain maximum safety, beauty, and livability; ensure the relevancy of revitalization efforts with the comprehensive plan; review, revise and enforce zoning laws and strengthen our code enforcement efforts; create inter-governmental planning organization with neighboring cities and counties; create a plan

and incentives for orderly annexation; maximize the effective use of our established core areas; create and preserve open spaces and parks; create and promote areas of economic activity and development on certain lake-fronts; provide adequate community policing; evaluate and strengthen our current Neighborhood Coordination Program; and implement neighborhood park improvement programs.

Action Steps Taken –

- Demolished 26 sub-standard structures.
- Streamlined code enforcement procedures and forms; laptops for officer field use have been provided.
- Exploring a proposal for implementing a special master code enforcement system versus a code enforcement board system to expedite dealing with code violations and repeat offenders.
- Review of a towing ordinance and adoption of the International Code is underway.
- Achieving code compliance more swiftly with the implementation of a courtesy green door tag notice system.
- Solicited vendor assistance in resolving the issue of abandoned shopping carts.
- Solicited vendor assistance in resolving the issue of grass clippings being blown into the rights-of-way.
- Created and sought Planning Commission approval of a neighborhood comprehensive plan element.
- Prepared four specific plans in draft form for the Lake Howard, Lake Martha, Lake Idyl and Southeast neighborhoods.
- Developed the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program in draft form to present to the City Commission in May.
- Introduced the new service action form and telephone line system to employees to provide a means for them to engage in our beautification and clean-up efforts.
- Partnered with Polk corrections to initiate the weekday inmate work program and continue the weekend warrior work program to supplement our workforce and strengthen efforts to improve area aesthetics.
- Provided a landlord/tenant information workshop; 70+ participated in the Saturday activity held in January.
- Resurfaced six roads at a cost of \$211,000.
- The Cypress Gardens Boulevard Landscape Project valued at \$104,177 was completed.
- The replacement of soil and installation of 2,031 new ornamental plants along the US Highway 17 overpass was completed.
- The \$132,097 Havendale Boulevard Landscape Project was completed.
- Acquired and demolished the Ford Auto Trim Building at the intersection of 5<sup>th</sup> Street, SW and the US 17 cross-over; a landscape improvement project is now complete.
- Avenue T improvement project plans are nearly 90% complete and project funding is being secured.

- Relocated Neighborhood Services unit adjacent to the Code Enforcement unit.
- New concepts in the Child Fingerprinting program were tested in the community.
- The Citizens Police Academy graduated 16 citizens in November 2003.
- A Business Police Academy is being considered.
- Partnered with Polk County EMS, Lake Wales Fire Department, Winter Haven Hospital and State Farm to conduct disaster preparedness training.
- Partnered with State Farm, Polk County EMS and the Polk County Traffic Safety Team, and Lowe's Home Improvement in hosting a Safety Day and Bike Rodeo at the Citi Centre.
- Implemented the first phase of 'personally assigned vehicle program' to increase the visibility of police presence within the community.
- Engaging in inter-local planning efforts with Polk County staff.
- The Fire Department completed their geographic response analysis to identify areas of the City where future facilities may be located.
- For public education and crisis mitigation purposes, the Fire Department is working towards establishing a safe-house educational trailer; the project is expected to be complete in January 2005.
- The Fire Department will begin a community smoke detector distribution program (one per household) in September 2004.
- The Fire Department staff is currently engaged in planning for the relocation of Station 1 and examining the strategic placement of additional fire stations in growth areas of the City.
- Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) placement in City facilities is being planned.
- It is anticipated that one advance life support equipped and staffed fire engine will be placed into service by October 2004.

### ***Affordable Housing***

*Vision Summary* – ensure desirable and affordable housing opportunities are available to attract new residents and businesses to the area.

### *Action Steps Taken* –

- Lake Maude Properties – it was determined the property could not meet the recreation needs as originally planned; the property has been split into two tracts. The 29-acre site directly across from DiamondPlex Softball facility is targeted to be affordable housing, and the 7-acre tract located lakeside is planned to become a nature park.
- Approved SHIP funding for two proposed housing developments. The first one is located on the corner of King Road and the old SR 540. Pinnacle housing has applied for funding through the Florida Housing Finance Corporation for a low interest loan to construct a 156 unit apartment complex. The second development is located behind the Mayfair apartment complex on the lakes May/Shipp canal. The JPM Group out of Jacksonville has applied for the same

funding as Pinnacle to construct an 80 unit town home community. If either one of the developments are funded by the State, then the City will partner with them using SHIP dollars and one development will be supplied \$150,000. By September, 2004, the State will determine if either of these projects will be funded.

### **Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices**

*Vision Summary* – improve the health status of the community by solving current and emerging health problems and promoting a quality of life and spirit that encourages diverse backgrounds to live, learn, work, and play harmoniously while developing physically, spiritually, mentally, and culturally; create a perpetual, nonprofit, nonpartisan, broad-based community organization to improve quality of life through positive change resulting from informed citizen participation, open dialogue, impartial research and consensus building; coordinate existing health efforts and eliminate duplicate services.

#### *Action Steps Taken -*

- Contracted with Mid-Florida Medical Services, specifically HealthWorks, for employment related medical service needs.
- Contracted with Health Options for Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services.
- Scheduled the Winter Haven Hospital Blood Mobile for quarterly site visits.
- Partnered with area medical service providers to offer an annual health fair for the benefit of employees and their dependents.
- Routinely distribute wellness literature and information to inform staff of available area resources.
- Medical community master planning discussions and coordination efforts are continuing with Gessler Clinic, Bond Clinic, Winter Haven Hospital and Clark and Daughtrey.

### **Lakes Preservation and Enjoyment**

*Vision Summary* – enhance the accessibility, management, enjoyment and use of our lakes; create a long-range plan to improve water quality, protect wildlife habitat, and ensure our lakes are swimmable, fishable and aesthetically pleasing; develop an aesthetically pleasing, lake-centered recreational greenway that ties the city and redeveloped water properties to the surrounding lakes; designate and establish urban lakefront development areas to enhance recreational, aesthetic and economic values of our lakes; promote community awareness and pride in our lakes through public education program development and the provision of activities that are economically and environmentally beneficial.

#### *Action Steps Taken -*

- Kimley-Horn and Associates completed the Urban Lakefront and Economic Revitalization Study to address economic development and revitalization in areas adjacent to lakes May, Shipp, Lulu and Howard; to analyze the Chain of Lakes Complex being maintained as a recreation element or redeveloping the site for housing, entertainment, or a commercial/retail establishment; to seek recommendations for promoting waterfront development while increasing recreation uses that interact with established commercial and residential areas; to seek land use and revitalization recommendations for the Lake Howard neighborhood; and to establish a rails-to-trails connectivity plan. A copy of the study may be obtained through the City's Development Services' Department.
- Improved Lake Howard Nature Park amenities by adding restroom facilities, picnic tables, and a boardwalk. These facilities are approximately 85% complete. The restrooms, picnic pavilions and park furniture have been installed. The boardwalk is 85% complete. The observation tower is being designed.
- Applied for funding for a Lake Howard storm-water project.
- Staff cleaned off approximately 2,500 feet of lakeshore and maintained another 9,000 feet of lakeshore at the primary City entrance ways.
- Finalized a proposal and obtained City Commission approval for a Lake May/Lulu storm-water project. The City Commission approved a contract for \$986,096 for the construction of these two projects. Construction is slated to begin in April 2004.
- Acquired property and funding for the Lake Hartridge Park/Storm-water project. The preliminary design and conceptual plans have been reviewed and hydrologic modeling has been completed.
- Sponsored the annual Lakes Alive event.
- Staff is working with Polk County representatives to transfer Roe Park from the County to the City.
- The City approved transferring limited rights to property on Lake Pansy for a boat ramp park. The Canal Commission applied for a grant from FDEP for this project, funding approval has not yet been received.
- Lakes Management and Leisure and Environmental Services' staff are partnering with the Chamber of Commerce to complete two canal beautification projects; one of the projects will be at the Lake Eloise/Lulu canal and the other will be at the Lake May/Howard canal.
- Lake Elbert Sidewalk project proposal (Lake Elbert Trail) – staff is prepared to partner with the Chamber of Commerce and others to resurrect the concept and seek funding for any desired construction.
- Lake Maude Nature Park – staff has developed a conceptual design for the construction of a nature park to include parking, a walking trail, picnic tables and barbeque grills.

*Report Concluded*