

City Manager's PROGRESS REPORT



This 'Guide to Services' is provided to residents and to those who operate businesses in Melbourne as a way of facilitating access to local government. The information presented here is intended to directly assist in the utilization of government resources.

The "City Manager's Progress Report" is provided to foster citizen awareness of municipal activities and programs, and to encourage participation. Information here will tell you how city government is utilizing community resources to provide critical services and enhance the quality of life.

The information in this report will indicate how Melbourne is continuing to evolve as the commercial and cultural center of an expanding urban area. Our area again gained national attention in 2006 as the Milken Institute released its Best Performing Cities Index. Ranked at the very top of the index was the Melbourne-Palm Bay-Titusville metropolitan area. The index measures jobs, wages, and growth in technological companies.

As Florida experiences a marked decrease in residential property sales, we are seeing a slowdown in residential construction. Yet it is easy to see that not all work has stopped. Construction continues on two of the largest condominium projects planned for Melbourne. City departments that review proposed commercial developments are seeing a continuing stream of those projects. Some of the projects may be fostered by a rollback in construction costs.

New City Hall is Planned

The lower cost of construction materials is a favorable factor in Melbourne's plans to replace the 40-year-old city hall building. The new facility will improve services to the community and relieve crowding of the buildings now in use for City operations. The City Council has approved an \$8.7-million contract with a local builder and construction work is to begin on the two-year project in a few months. The project is to also include a 347-space parking garage that will provide some 200 spaces for use by visitors to the historic downtown area. The four-level garage is to cost \$5.7-million.

Just as the ongoing changes in public facilities have marked a century of progress for Melbourne, changes in leadership are also an important part of the municipal history. Two members of the City Council -- Loretta Hand and Grace Walker -- retired in 2006 after devoting a combined half-century of service as elected officials serving Melbourne. In the November election, voters selected Joanne Corby and John Thomas to join the City Council, and Mark LaRusso to continue his service on the Council.

In an acknowledgement of the importance of Melbourne's community heritage and of community values, the City Council approved a mechanism to encourage the preservation of historical structures. In 2006, the City Council



Melbourne's Promenade boardwalk at Crane Creek can provide a great view of wildlife. The first phase of a dredging project for the creek was funded by the City and state agencies. The goal is the removal of muck from the tributary to the Indian River Lagoon, where the mud-like material can damage the ecosystem.

appointed members to a Historical Preservation Board to set the stage for efforts to temper modernization with a respect for the past. The preservation ordinance provides the framework for careful consideration of projects that would result in removal of older structures, yet also preserves property rights.

Community attitudes are prompting other changes, as improvements in City services are made in response to the results of a citizen survey. An effort has been made to implement changes that address the concerns which citizens expressed in the survey.

The recent public meeting on the topic of code enforcement was one result. The meeting was part of an independent study that is to yield suggestions as to how that process can best serve Melbourne residents and businesses. A number of other improvements in areas ranging from transportation to emergency services were approved by the City Council as part of the current municipal budget.

Other activities are underway that will impact Melbourne's future. Members of the community were recently invited to participate in a visioning workshop, helping the City formulate a blueprint for guiding development over the next couple of decades. Those in attendance were encouraged to think about how the expected growth should be guided. The workshop was an early step in Melbourne's review and update of the comprehensive plan that was drafted 10 years ago in compliance with state law.

Transportation Projects Continue

Melbourne's City Council continues to take the initiative in consideration of ways to fund needed road improvements. However, the City's options for improving some of Melbourne's busiest streets are limited because those roadways are controlled by Brevard County or the Florida Department of Transportation.

Melbourne relies on about \$3-million in annual revenue from gasoline taxes and transportation impact fees to help pay for maintenance and improvements to City streets. Melbourne's roadway improvements this year include about \$1-million in resurfacing of city streets.

The \$3.84-million city project to widen a busy portion of Eber Road was completed in 2006. Melbourne continues to contribute to county projects to improve arterial roadways, including the planned widening of Palm Bay Road and the design of improvements to Ellis Road.

The County Commission has approved several transportation projects for county roadways in Melbourne. The planned work includes widening of Wickham Road between U.S. 192 and NASA Boulevard, and resurfacing and reconstruction of other portions of the roadway. The county is also pursuing construction of new roadways that can assist the traffic flow in Melbourne.

Inside the city, work continues each year on projects that improve roadway efficiency and safety. The projects range from improvements to intersection signal operations to maintenance work on 10,000 signs in Melbourne and the installation of roadway markings. A 2006 investment of \$274,536 in an upgrade of traffic signals to use light emitting diodes will save enough power to repay the cost in three years.

The Pace of Development

While ample building activity was recorded in 2006, the pace was not at the level recorded in some previous years. Overall, the value of development projects declined in 2006 as compared to the previous year. The number of building permits issued dropped from 9,860 to 5,921, in part due to a smaller number of hurricane recovery projects.

The biggest value decline was recorded for residential construction, which dropped from



\$218 million in 2005 to \$90 million in 2006. The 2005 activity in residential construction was a peak level, and was nearly double the construction value recorded in 2004.

Commercial construction, on the other hand, increased from a 2005 value of \$68 million to \$86 million in 2006. The higher value of commercial construction last year is still far below the 2004 peak of \$150-million. The value for miscellaneous building projects came in at just under \$30 million, down from \$67 million in 2005 and below the 2004 level of \$41-million.

Reports from some of the City's key departments and divisions indicate the level of activities in 2006. For instance, the Code Compliance Division issued 600 permits for new construction projects and issued 620 certificates of occupancy. Reviews included 5,631 various other types of construction and improvement permits.

In support of development projects, plans examiners in the Code Compliance Division reviewed 4,703 residential and commercial plans for compliance with building codes. During construction, the City's building and electrical inspectors conducted 19,505 inspections for compliance with the approved plans and building codes.

In 2006, the Code Enforcement Section received approximately 22,000 requests for service. Code officers located and required correction of 6,092 violations of the City Code. Some 123 cases of non-compliance were presented to the City Code Enforcement Board for consideration. Division Fire Inspectors conducted 233 safety inspections for community events that hosted some 350,000 persons.

City planners reviewed 38 site plans with 2,424 dwelling units in single-family and multi-family structures. Plans for six residential subdivisions with 964 lots or tracts were submitted, while one commercial subdivision with 12 lots was reviewed. Engineers reviewed 103 sets of construction plans and gave final approval to 63.

Modest Growth Continues

Melbourne's population for 2006 was just under 77,000, according to a University of Florida estimate. The annual population growth remains at about 2%. Annexations increased

the geographic area of the City to just under 41 square miles.

During 2006, the City annexed 699 acres of residential and commercial property with an assessed valuation of more than \$46-million. Larger areas that were voluntarily annexed over the last two years allowed existing residential and commercial properties to gain access to Melbourne's water utility and other municipal services. Additional annexation elections this year will allow residents of enclaves along Aurora Road -- unincorporated areas inside the city limits -- to vote on whether they would like to become part of the city.

Redevelopment Progresses

BABCOCK STREET: The most visible aspects of the area's resurgence are the extensive streetscaping and the level of commercial activity that has returned. The redevelopment committee is now updating plans for the area. In the meantime, engineering work is underway toward a final phase of the realignment of the northern end of Babcock Street.

Private investment in the area remains strong. New developments have included the Lanier World Wide facility on NASA Boulevard, the Marriott Residence Inn project on Babcock Street, and new buildings for Riverside Bank and Suntrust Bank.

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN: Plans are underway to extend the success of the redevelopment work in Historic Downtown Melbourne into the U.S. 1 corridor just to the south. The redevelopment district was expanded in 2006 to set the stage for improvements in that area.

In the downtown area, the \$1.8-million streetscape project is nearing completion. An entranceway arch is to be installed at the western end of the project area, near where New Haven Avenue intersects with Strawbridge Avenue (U.S. 192). Crosswalk improvements have also been put in place to the east of the original project site, one more step in visually unifying the entire downtown area.

Redevelopment funds are also allowing the addition of \$100,000 in outdoor furnishings along New Haven Avenue and at Front Street Park, including bike racks, benches, and trash receptacles. State-funded improvements to Front Street Park are also underway. Preliminary engineering work has been completed for a

project to put a new, pedestrian-friendly face on the portion of Strawbridge Avenue between the railroad tracks and Livingston Street.

OLDE EAU GALLIE: A pavilion with a stage has been completed at the Eau Gallie Square at the intersection of Eau Gallie Boulevard and Highland Avenue, and other improvements are underway. Already the structure is hosting entertainers who perform during Saturday farmer's market events at the location.

Construction has also started on a replacement for the Eau Gallie Pier, swept away by hurricanes. The new, expanded structure is being put in place with \$700,000 in local, state, and federal funds.

Public Safety Is a Priority

FIRE DEPARTMENT: The Fire Department responded to 13,557 emergency calls in 2006, down slightly from the previous year. Of those calls, 76% were for emergency medical assistance. The 312 fire incidents reported caused more than \$1.5 million in damages, while it is estimated that \$106.8 million in property was placed in jeopardy. Melbourne fire inspectors investigated 53 fires and determined one fire to be caused by arson.

Operations began from Melbourne's eighth fire station located on Eber Road just east of Dairy Road. Twelve firefighters were added to allow for staffing of the station. The addition means that in both the northern and the southern halves of the city, firefighters are responding from four station locations.

POLICE DEPARTMENT: Throughout 2006, the Police Department was addressing the challenges of an expanded patrol area and an increase in calls for service. During 2006, the department responded to 119,318 calls, an increase of 10% over the previous year. Officers responded to 2,375 traffic accidents, an increase of 3%, and issued 29,676 citations, reflecting a 19% increase over 2005. The 6,000 arrests in 2006 were an 8% increase over activity in the previous year.

Efforts of the Selective Traffic Enforcement Unit are credited with reducing traffic accidents at the top six crash locations in Melbourne by 29%. The 2% drop in traffic accidents citywide is considered significant when increases in population and city area are considered. The traffic unit earned a state award for its awareness and enforcement activities. The unit responded to nine traffic fatalities in 2006, down from 13 during the previous year.

In its first full year of operations, the Sexual Offender Tracking Unit built comprehensive files for each offender/predator living within City limits, and completed quarterly address verifications on all offenders/predators as they moved in and out of Melbourne. The unit also tracked down several absconded offenders and filed eight felony arrest warrants.

The domestic violence victim advocacy program continues to improve services to domestic violence victims with the start of a small contin-



CITY REDEVELOPMENT projects advanced in three areas of Melbourne during 2006, including a major facelift at the western section of the Historic Downtown Melbourne area.

Pictured are City planners inspecting planters, crosswalks, palm trees, and other features added to improve the appearance of the area and provide better traffic control. Improvements were also extended to eastern portions of New Haven Avenue.



BETTER COMMUNICATION: Improvements to the police computer-aided dispatch and records management computer system are complete. The \$1-million upgrade allows for faster action by staff in the Communication Center in dispatching officers. The improved system also allows officers to use laptop computers in patrol vehicles to instantly access critical information.

agency fund for victims and an active program supplying 911 cell phones to victims.

The City Council has approved changes in Police Department operations to improve benefits for officers, part of an ongoing effort to ensure successful recruitment and retention. The City Council approved a take-home patrol car plan that is being phased in over a period of two years. The take-home cars are to reduce the time that officers are involved in shift changes, and will also assist officer recruitment.

Housing Programs Continue

The City utilizes a variety of state and federal funding sources to improve the quality of life for Melbourne residents. The assistance is provided through programs managed by the Melbourne's Housing and Community Development Department.

In 2006, the City invested a total of \$1,980,352 in funds available from CDBG (Community Development Block Grant), HOME (HOME Investment Partnership Program), and SHIP (State Housing Initiatives Partnership) Program grants. The federal and state funds were put to use to fund vital community services provided by nonprofit organizations, to assist with economic development, to complete public facility improvements, to provide housing assistance, and for removal of dilapidated buildings in targeted neighborhoods.

Much was achieved through partnerships with nonprofit organizations. Providing community services and housing assistance programs for Melbourne residents were the South Brevard Sharing Center, the Coalition for the Hungry and Homeless, PREVENT! of Brevard, the Space Coast Center for Independent Living, the Salvation Army, Club Esteem, the Child Care Association of Brevard County, Community Housing Initiative, Habitat for Humanity of Brevard County, the South Brevard Women's Center, and Trinity Towers. Some 218 households received housing assistance and hundreds more received subsidized childcare, after-school

enrichment, summer camp scholarships, and counseling and support services.

In 2006, public facility improvements included construction and renovation of basketball courts at Brothers and Lipscomb parks, and design work on a first phase of improvements at Lipscomb Park.

Construction began on a Business Innovation Center on NASA Boulevard to facilitate new business growth and job creation in Melbourne. Funding included \$250,000 in CDBG funds, an investment that is expected to create jobs for low- and moderate-income persons. The center is to be operated by the Technological Research and Development Authority, a state agency. The U. S. Department of Commerce is providing \$1-million in funding for the \$5.4 million project.

Property Value Increases Allow Tax Rate Reduction

The City Council approved a \$164-million budget that provides for improvements in services and facilities while accommodating increasing costs of operations.

The property tax rate was reduced from \$4.74 per \$1,000 of taxable property valuation to \$4.51. Property taxes provide more than 30% of General Fund revenues and more than 12% of overall revenues to the City. While the millage rate was reduced, property tax revenue increased by \$2.8-million due to changes in the overall valuation of property in Melbourne.

The budget includes a \$65.9-million General Fund to provide for day-to-day operations. The \$27.9-million capital improvements fund provides for facilities and infrastructure projects.

The budget also includes two self-sustaining funds that receive revenue directly from customer payments: a \$2.6-million fund for the two municipal golf courses and a \$44.9-million Water and Sewer Fund. A budget of \$1.4-million was approved for the City stormwater program, an assessment-funded effort to reduce flood risks and comply with federal environmental mandates.

Grant funding continues to be an important means of funding major improvements and providing services that would not otherwise be available to residents. The City was awarded just over \$3.8-million in state and federal awards in 2006. About \$1.4-million of that funding is being used to improve low-income neighborhoods, provide housing assistance, and fund other services benefiting low-income residents throughout the City. Grant funds also helped support programs in the areas of public safety, recreation, planning and economic development, and utilities.

We welcomed an announcement from Moody's Investors Service of an upgrade of the City of Melbourne's bond rating to 'A1' status. The upgrade applied to \$19-million in utility bonds that were refunded to save \$1-million in interest charges, and to \$79.3-million in other bonds that have allowed the City to borrow

money for major water and sewer projects. The rating change reflects well on our financial management and will result in lower borrowing costs for the City on future water and sewer financings.

Recreation Upgrades in Place

The many improvements to parks and recreation facilities during 2006 were accompanied by development of a two-year recovery plan for the two municipal golf courses. That plan, which includes a marketing strategy along with course upgrades, is providing a successful path to revitalized finances. Financial health is a key element for the self-supporting courses. A new fleet of leased golf carts was among the advances in 2006.

The city continues to offer a diversity of opportunities for recreation at community centers, sports fields, and parks. Over the last year the investment in these resources has ranged from new climbing walls at three parks to basketball courts, shade shelters, and concession stands.

Fencing was completed at Fee Avenue and Jimmy Moore tennis complexes, and the Ballard Park tennis courts are to be resurfaced and receive new fencing in the near future. Another upcoming project will see lighting added to all three soccer fields at Southwest Park. Plans are complete for the renovation of the senior softball field at Lipscomb Street Park, along with the addition of a new baseball field. The Eau Gallie Civic Center is to soon receive a new roof.

When the swimming pools open this spring, the successful swimming lesson program is to expand to include classes at the Fee Avenue Pool as well as at the Sherwood Pool. At Fee Avenue, a water aerobics class is also to be offered.

Protecting Water Resources

At the end of 2006, the Phase II improvements at the surface water treatment plant were about 65 percent complete. The new components should be placed into service in August of this year, allowing the plant to begin operating with the ozone treatment and a reduction in the amount of chlorine used.

The addition of ozone treatment will ensure that the water quality will continue to meet the

The FEE AVENUE TENNIS COMPLEX, along with the Jimmy Moore Tennis Complex off Sarno Road, received facility improvements that are to continue at both locations in the current budget year.





REPLACEMENT of wastewater transmission pipes is undertaken by a City crew in this photo from 2006. Other Melbourne teams continue a program of replacing neighborhood water transmission lines in an ongoing effort to ensure service quality.

Progress Report & Guide to City Services

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federal standards for by-products of the disinfection process. An activated carbon system will be used as supplemental treatment for taste and odor compounds.

To address water quality issues in Melbourne's water distribution system -- primarily discoloration of delivered water -- the City is working with a consulting company to complete a study in preparation for a unidirectional flushing program. The full program is expected to start this spring. In addition, improvements to the water distribution system are continuing, with upgrades to various distribution lines being constructed throughout the City.

The St. Johns River Water Management District has given approval to the City's five-year update to its 20-year consumptive use permit. The arduous approval process took a year and a half to complete. The City was able to gain a correction in the withdrawal levels reflected in the permit. The permit now shows that our withdrawal needs will have a minor impact on the natural water supply provided by the St. Johns River.

Managing Community Utilities

Construction has recently been completed to install a 16-inch reclaimed water distribution line between the Grant Street Wastewater Treatment Plant and the D.B. Lee Wastewater Treatment Plant. Interconnecting the two systems will allow greater flexibility for distribution to reclaimed water customers. It also gives the City the ability to provide more reuse water to existing and new customers.

The City is continuing a wastewater and stormwater pipe lining program. Rather than replace pipes, the program involves installation of a cured-in-place liner. The process avoids disruptive construction projects.

Other improvements to the wastewater collection system also continue on an annual basis. Last year, numerous sewer line replacement projects were completed. Upgrades to several large lift stations have been completed or are under construction to accommodate Melbourne's growth.

The replacement of older water meters with fully automated meters is continuing. The new meters contain a transmitting device that allows a utility worker to remain in a vehicle while using a laptop computer to gather readings. As the new meters are phased in, they are allowing savings in labor costs while increasing worker safety and efficiency. Some 4,800 automated meters were installed in 2006, bringing the number in service to 8,472.

The City continues its active program of environmental education, with an emphasis on water conservation, prevention of stormwater pollution, and recycling. For the first time last year, the City participated in the Drop Savers Poster Contest, administered by the Florida Section of the American Water Works Association to celebrate National Drinking Water Week. Melbourne participates in inter-governmental environmental teams to educate and encourage citizen participation.

Melbourne's Toilet Retrofit Rebate Program entered its ninth year. The program encourages the installation of toilets that conserve water. By the end of 2006, rebates had been provided to 1,529 Melbourne water customers.

An expanded curbside recycling program began in the summer of 2006. Additional items include paperboard, paper bags, magazines, phone books, 'junk' mail, and food boxes. For Melbourne's recycling efforts in 2006, the City received \$112,790 in rebates from Waste Management, the company that handles solid waste disposal under contract to the City. More than 5.5-million pounds of solid waste was recycled.

Stormwater Program Expands

The City's stormwater assessment program provides more than \$1-million annually to fund the stormwater utility. The program began in 1999 to reduce flooding and to allow the community to meet federal environmental standards. The City's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program focuses on the reduction of stormwater pollution.

Property was purchased in 2006 at the inter-

section of Fee Avenue and Apollo Boulevard for a stormwater treatment facility. Improvement projects include upgrades to pipes and outfalls, and construction of new retention areas. Street cleaning equipment has also been purchased to reduce pollutants on City streets that would otherwise be carried into local water bodies during storm events.

Earlier this year, a stormwater education section was added to the municipal web site, part of an awareness effort that is now being expanded. A stormwater pollution hotline (953-6241) was established to receive reports from the community.

Engaging the Community

We continue to encourage citizen involvement in government affairs. The City supports programs to improve communication with residents and businesses, and to encourage participation in government. Volunteers directly assisting municipal operations include more than 150 members of committees and boards.

We plan to continue periodic sessions of the successful Melbourne Citizen's Academy, an activity that allows participants to learn about municipal activities and opportunities for their direct involvement.

Though most municipal employees go about their work without great public recognition, they continue to contribute heavily to Melbourne's quality of life. The citywide survey confirmed that Melbourne's residents understand the value of the City workforce.

As the work-year continues to unfold, each of us in the City organization will do our best to live up to the municipal motto: 'Service is Our Business.'

Jack M. Schluckebier
City Manager