City Commission Addresses “New Normal” at Strategic Planning Workshop

On January 11, 2010 the City Commission held a Strategic Planning Workshop at Ironwood Golf Course to discuss long-term, strategic approaches to providing effective municipal services under what many are calling the “new normal.”

The new normal acknowledges that the current economic downturn is different from those of recent decades. The prosperity of past years will no longer be the standard environment in which local government operates.

During the Workshop, the City Commission provided feedback and guidance on priorities and key policy issues. Priorities included public involvement in the budget process, the clean-up of the Koppers Superfund site, revenue diversity and process improvement. These were all discussed to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization in this new economic climate.

INITIATIVE WATCH

On November 4th, 2008 City and County residents voted in favor of a half-cent sales tax initiative commonly referred to as the Wild Spaces, Public Places (WS/PP) tax initiative. Read this quarterly update to learn about how WS/PP Projects have impacted the City’s Strategic Goals and Initiatives:

- Depot Park
- Senior Recreation Center
- Nature Parks
Develop and continue programs to reduce the causes of crime

**Public Safety**

*Maintain a safe and healthy community in which to live.*

**Reorganization**
The Gainesville Police Department began and completed the process of preparing a comprehensive reorganizational plan to be implemented at the beginning of 2010. This process involved four internal committees studying the GPD mission, community policing and organizational and district structure. This plan also involved community input and incorporated the final report from the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives which was completed in December, 2009.

Reorganization of the Department was centered around goals of reducing Uniformed Crime Reporting (UCR) Part I crime in 2010 and improving customer service. During this period, front line service was bolstered by a patrol “redeployment” which began in September. It streamlined the agency and placed approximately 30 personnel back on the road in uniformed patrol. Personnel came from administrative positions, existing operational positions that were not in uniform, and specialty units such as the Traffic Safety Team and Tactical Impact Unit. This redeployment was designed to focus on the increased crime pattern reflected in year to year comparisons.

**Tactical Briefing**
The tactical briefing concept continued to evolve. Tactical briefings provide weekly trend and crime information to command staff and shift commanders, who then develop a weekly plan to combat those crimes. Robberies and burglaries continued to be the primary focus of the tactical briefings. Preliminary statistical analysis indicates that robberies decreased substantially the last quarter of 2009 as compared to 2008 and that burglaries had a negligible increase.

New grants that went into effect on October 1 totaled just under $2 million dollars. These include the 21st Century School Board grant for approximately $120,000, Byrne Grant funding for three programs totaling approximately $74,000, a second Byrne County grant to fund in-car cameras for $109,000, a CAPP grant through the County for approximately $55,000, a bullet proof vest award for $27,500, a Project Safe Neighborhood for $31,000, and two large grants via the Federal Byrne Recovery Act funding the Internet Crimes Against Children for $727,000 and an additional $449,000 for many different items through the Memorial Act.

**Partnerships**
One large partnership with the University of Florida Police Department continued through mid-December. UPD provided two party patrol trained officers to handle party patrol matters in areas around the University of Florida on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday nights. UPD also provided two officers who patrolled the corridors around the University of Florida and the College Park and University Park neighborhoods.

**Awards**
The Reichert House Youth Academy won first place from the International Association of Chiefs of Police for community policing programs, a very prestigious honor. Gainesville also received the Safety City award from the national Responsible Hospitality Institute. This was received for the manner in which GPD handled the University of Florida national championship celebrations and hospitality district initiatives such as the underage drinking ordinance championed by City Commissioner Jeanna Mastrodicasa.

**Innovation**
Innovative programs operating to reduce crime during this quarter include; a specialized restorative justice training program for mediators, safety kiosk, and an officer trained in gang resistance education geared toward elementary school children. Extensive public information on crime prevention continued via three original Police Beat episodes, the weekly SKY radio show, and regular media interaction with all outlets.

**Girls Club Annual Fair**

**Vendor Training**
Economic Development

**Foster economic development and encourage redevelopment**

**Ensure transparent, efficient and consistent regulation of land development in furtherance of the Comprehensive Plan**

In the first quarter of 2010, Building Inspections went live with the Innoprise System. Staff will be running Innoprise side by side with its prior system to ensure that all kinks with the system are worked out. It is anticipated that Code Enforcement will be going live with Innoprise in the second quarter thus wrapping all functional areas into the system.

Staff received a first draft of modifications to the City’s Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code from its Planning Consultant, Planning Works. This draft is intended to address short term inconsistencies in both documents and will go to the Community Development Committee and then the City Commission sometime in the second quarter.

A revised staff report template has been designed by the Current Planning staff and is intended to address concerns from the City Commission regarding substantive and formatting content. In addition, Current Planning staff has made a variety of improvements to the visual content of the Planning and Development Services website and worked to make more information electronically accessible to customers.

**Continue to position City to take advantage of innovation economy and identify plan for innovation zone near UF**

Planning and Development Services staff reviewed the plans for the Innovation Hub at a First Step meeting in the first quarter. The Hub is an approximate 45,000 square foot (3 story) building to be located on the northeast corner of 2nd Avenue SW and the AGH site. The Hub will be the location of the University’s future Innovation Economy headquarters and will house some University functions as well as provide space for potential tenants.

The Planning and Development Services Director participated with other community leaders in the drafting of the Council for Economic Outreach (CEO) Innovation Economy Strategic Plan. The Director participated in the geography subcommittee designed to help determine the future locations of Innovation Economy industries. It is anticipated that the Plan will be introduced to the public in January, 2010.

The EDUCC worked diligently on the five year update of the City’s Strategic Action Plan for Economic Development. It is anticipated that the Plan will be through Committee in January and referred to the City Commission in February.

**Improve coordination with Alachua County in order to more effectively plan and develop Gainesville’s Urban Reserve Area**

The City Commission approved on final reading transportation policies associated with SB 360 and the extension of TCEA’s throughout the City’s limits. These policies were addressed within the context of a comprehensive plan amendment that received very little negative comment from either the State Department of Community Affairs (DCA) or Alachua County.

The City Commission approved the Butler Plaza Land Use Plan Amendment Petition and will be addressing the transmittal ordinance and corresponding zoning likely sometime in the second quarter. The affected property was previously located within Alachua County but adjacent to the City and was voluntarily annexed in 2008.

Similarly, the Plan Board approved land use and zoning petitions associated with the Urban Village located in and around SW 20th Avenue and other properties that have been annexed in the same general area since 2005. These petitions will be reviewed by the City Commission in the second quarter.
Complete the implementation of the SEGRI Project

The Site

The Special Area Plan for the former Kennedy Homes site is closer to being adopted as part of City Codes. Planning & Development Services Department is taking the Plan through the approvals process, and Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) staff has offered to assist in this process. CRA Staff are also contemplating new ideas for the former Kennedy Homes site and will bring that forward in 2010.

The Area

A Guaranteed Maximum Price was approved for the Hawthorne Road Café, which is also located in the Eastside Redevelopment Area along with the SEGRI Project. Construction on the Hawthorne Road Café is expected to begin in March 2010.

Progress continues for beautification projects in east Gainesville. Projects along major corridors will begin in 2010 such as: Lincoln Middle School fencing, medians and paint programs.

Complete the implementation of the Strategic Redevelopment Plan for Depot Park

Remediation of the park area is underway, and Depot Avenue reconstruction has begun. The construction documents for the Depot building are being finalized. It is anticipated that rehabilitation of the Depot Building and phase I of the Park construction will in full swing by late 2010.

Complete the implementation of the Strategic Redevelopment Plan for GRU Area

CRA staff is looking at zoning and regulatory framework for the GRU site while, simultaneously, having the site surveyed. The end goal is to be able to start construction when GRU abandons the site and relocates to the new Eastside Operations Center.

Increase the amount of affordable housing throughout the City

The SHIP Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) continued its discussion on increasing the amount of affordable housing and low-cost housing throughout the City. Areas of concern included affordable housing issues affecting very low and low-income families in the City. As a part of this process, the AHAC continues to participate in the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) process in preparation for their next Affordable Housing Incentive Report due in December 2011.

The AHAC formed a joint ad hoc committee with the Citizens Advisory Board for Community Development (CACC) to develop a new tenant relocation program. This proposed program would address future apartment closures resulting in economic displacement of low-income tenant households. The group met in February to begin developing an outline for the proposed program.

The City continues to administer the new Florida Homebuyer Opportunity Program (FHOP), which is funded by the State of Florida through the SHIP Program. The FHOP, was signed into law to ensure that residents of the state derive the maximum possible economic benefit from the first time homebuyer federal tax credit created through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Since the inception of the FHOP in September 2009, two first-time homebuyers have received assistance in the amount of $16,000, with two additional first-time homebuyers pending assistance in the amount of $16,000. On November 6, 2009, the federal First Time Homebuyer Tax Credit (FTHBTC) program was officially extended. This extension allows for homebuyers that have an executed contract on a home on or before April 30, 2010, that is closed on or by June 30, 2010 to apply for the tax credit. The FHOP will be available until June 30, 2010 as approved by the State of Florida.

Additionally, in an effort to achieve this initiative, the City continues to provide assistance through its Comprehensive Housing Program including homeowner rehabilitation, mortgage foreclosure intervention, down payment assistance, and homebuyer/homeowner education to promote affordable homeownership and to sustain City neighborhoods by preserving the City’s affordable housing stock.
Continue implementation of the 10-year plan to end homelessness

Cold-weather Shelter
During the first quarter, the City of Gainesville (City) and Alachua County (County) provided funding to the St. Francis House and the Gainesville Housing Authority (GHA) to provide Emergency Shelter Services. The City and County also funded the Cold Night Shelter Program, to provide additional shelter for homeless persons with immediate cold weather needs.

Holiday Meals
The City Commission authorized staff to place a petition on the Planning Board Agenda in November to allow a waiver of the 130 meal limit for three (3) national holidays in a calendar year. The Planning Board heard the petition and the City Commission received the Planning Board’s report in February 2010.

The City Manager approved the usage of the MLK Center for Thanksgiving and Christmas day for the St. Francis House or other non-profit organizations to provide meal services to disadvantaged and homeless residents in our community.

One-Stop Homeless Shelter
The City of Gainesville and the Seller of the ADC property have continued their negotiation for the City to purchase the property. In order for the sale of the property to be complete, the Seller must resolve road easement issues. Specifications for the design/build have been completed. The engineering firm, CHW is scheduled to go before the Planning Board to complete rezoning of the property from I-2 to PD. The original application was scheduled for January 2010; however the Planning Board rescheduled the meeting for February 2010.

Streamline the efforts of agencies providing child victim services
A meeting was scheduled with Commissioner Poe and the City Manager during the first quarter to discuss the next step in this initiative. During the meeting further direction was given about questions and obstacles that need to be addressed before moving forward. During the second quarter, those questions and obstacles will be addressed.

Homelessness Prevention
The Alachua County Housing Authority continued to administer the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) to provide services to homeless and low income residents to stabilize their housing. Funding is used to provide assistance such as:
- Monthly rent payments
- Security and utility deposits
- Moving costs and hotel vouchers
- Relocation and stabilization services
- Outreach and legal services

Since the inception of the HPRP in October 2009, a total of 84 persons/32 households have received homelessness prevention assistance and a total of 25 persons/14 households have received homeless assistance. It is anticipated that a total of 540 persons/205 households will receive assistance from the HPRP upon completion of the program.

The Gainesville/Alachua County Office on Homelessness (OOH) and GHA submitted an application to the federal government for recovery funds to assist ex-offenders with employment & training services, and other services to prevent homelessness within our community.

Explore the potential for addressing senior issues and services
During the first quarter, the City Commission approved the ranking of design/build firms for the Senior Recreation Center. The number one ranking firm, WG Mills, has been in negotiations with the General Services Department and a contract should be finalized during the second quarter.

The General Services Department and Elder Care of Alachua County held a meeting with Community Coalition for Older Adults (CCOA) members on January 11, 2010 to receive input on the programming needs of the facility. City Commissioner Donovan and County Chair Chesnutt attended. The General Services Department scheduled the pre-design kick off meeting with the project team members to meet the architectural team and discuss how the design process will work. The first pre-design charette was held January 19, 2010 with the stakeholders to discuss goals, objectives, mission, programming, etc. for the project. The first neighborhood workshop will be held in the second quarter.

Analyze the availability and accessibility of youth programs and identify a role for City government
During the first quarter, stakeholders provided updates to the Parks, Recreation and Public Works Committee on the summer programs offered to youth in the community. While Juvenile crime statistics were reduced from the summer of 2008 by 9%, the consensus of all providers was that transportation was a challenge for youth to access the many programs and services available.

The Juvenile Resources Guide and GAP Analysis of Programs was updated during the first quarter. During the second quarter, staff will conduct a spatial analysis of juvenile crime in relation to the location of programs, public transportation, and schools.
Government Effectiveness

Continue to increase the effectiveness of local government and maintain a strong fiscal condition

Fiscal Responsibility

Improve communication through increased use of the Internet for City services

During the first quarter, the Communications Office hosted the First Annual City of Gainesville Photography Contest: The Gainesville Way of Life. Submission of photographs by participants was conducted online using the City of Gainesville photograph-sharing social media site. Award-winning contest photographs are featured in an exhibition at the Hippodrome State Theater, in a downloadable City of Gainesville calendar and in the City of Gainesville 2009 Citizen’s Report.

The Communications Office completed production of the Paynes Prairie Sheet Flow Restoration Project video in support of Gainesville Regional Utilities. The video is being telecast on Community 12TV, the city’s local government access station and is featured online at the City’s website. In addition, the Communications Office added an informational on-line component to the City of Gainesville Citizen’s Academy fall 2009 session.

Increase civic engagement

During the first quarter, a variety citizen comment was received by the City Commission on the selection of a new Equal Opportunity Officer, the efficacy and safety of fluoridating our water supply, the Koppers Superfund site, and the meal limit at St. Francis House. This type of civic engagement reflects that issues being addressed by the City Commission are communicated with the public, and the City welcomes residents’ participation.

The Communications Office hosted the fall 2009 session of Gainesville 101: The City of Gainesville Citizen’s Academy. Twenty participants successfully completed the six-week program.

Continue annexation efforts in the urbanized area to maintain social, economic, and financial diversity

As reported in the previous quarter, the City conducted an annexation referendum on the eastside of Gainesville’s City limits on November 10, 2009. The annexation referendum failed with 669 votes against annexation and 49 votes for annexation. This referendum was conducted strictly by mail-in ballot in an attempt to increase voter participation. With over 700 voters participating, this resulted in almost 40% of registered voters participating in the single-item ballot, and approximately 24% of the entire area’s population voting in the referendum.

In July of 2009, the State Legislature passed a bill that restricts local governments from advocating for or spending public dollars on any item that would be voted on by residents. This new law directly affects the annexation by referendum process. However, political action committees, such as Fire Rescue Professionals Political Action Fund and Public Safety Alliance, are able to oppose items like annexation. It is anticipated that staff will bring an item before the City Commission for discussion in regards to the future of annexations by referendum, and potential alternative options.
Invest in community infrastructure and continue to enhance the transportation network and systems

Complete capital projects at parks and continue land conservation & acquisition

**WS/PP capital projects underway during the 1st quarter:**

- Cofrin Nature Park Purchase Order Complete
- TB McPherson Purchase Order Complete
- Lincoln Park Purchase Order Complete
- Albert “Ray” Massey Westside Park Purchase Order Complete
- Cone Park Purchase Order Complete
- Possum Creek Purchase Order Complete
- Rosa B. Williams Purchase Order Complete
- Completion of design, bid plans and specs for NE Park bike path

During the first quarter, land acquisition strategies continued to be developed and acquisition of Smokey Bear Park from the State Division of Forestry moved forward through negotiations, which are anticipated to conclude during the second quarter of the fiscal year.

The Jurecko property, adjacent to Morningside Nature Center has been approved for addition to the land registry of Wild Spaces, Public Places targeted acquisitions.

WS/PP funded capital projects underway during the first quarter included NE Park, Possum Creek, Rosa B. Williams, Cone Park, TB McPherson, Lincoln, Albert “Ray” Massey Westside Park, Citizens Park, and Cofrin Park.

Support the reconstruction of transportation facilities to encourage redevelopment of 6th Street

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) determined that construction phasing for ARRA funded projects could not be allowed as previously approved. The bid date was moved back to allow modification to the construction documents in order to meet the scope description as required by FDOT. A revised bid due date has been set for January 14, 2010. Construction is scheduled to begin in March 2010.

The design and construction schedule of the remaining section of 6th Street Rail Trail, between SW 2nd Avenue and NW 10th Avenues, remains the same.

The plans, construction documents and bid package for the SW 2nd Avenue at 6th Street Roundabout were completed in December. The construction

Support the reconstruction of transportation facilities to encourage redevelopment of Depot Ave.

**Segment 1: SW 13th Street to just west of SW 11th Street**
No further progress to report this quarter.

**Segment 2: SW 11th Street to Main Street**
Final design and ROW acquisition are underway.

**Segment 3: Main Street to just west of SE 7th Street**
Construction is underway.

**Segment 4: SE 7th Street to Williston Road**
The design plans are currently 30% complete. Final Design and ROW acquisition began in the fall of 2009.
Code Enforcement is developing a program that will look at designated areas and their crime rates prior to concentrated Code Enforcement efforts in those areas. This baseline data will be used to determine Code Enforcement’s impact. Additionally, Code Enforcement will determine the most prevalent violations citywide and by zone. Performance indicators such as staff time to complete a case will be developed to measure performance. Staff is also looking at best practices to encourage voluntary compliance and has developed a plan to implement a community volunteer program, and a postcard program to encourage volunteer groups and residents to take an active role in maintaining the aesthetic value of their neighborhood.

Code Enforcement has worked to enhance public awareness of city code through a variety of tools. This includes a presentation on Community 12TV, information on the city’s website, attending community meetings, outreach to school children, and the development of a “Most Common Code Violations” brochure. Staff is also promoting before and after photos of code cases and maps of active code violations and neighborhood characteristics to provide to the public.
On October 19, 2009 staff from the City of Gainesville and Alachua County presented the draft feasibility study and staff comments at a public meeting. Citizen’s comments were heard and incorporated into the recommendations sent to the City and County Commissions.

On October 29, 2009, a Joint City of Gainesville/Alachua County Commission meeting was held to discuss staff’s proposed comments and hear additional public comments on the draft feasibility study for the Cabot/Koppers Superfund site. The City/County Commission comments were incorporated into the response on the draft feasibility study.

On November 16, 2009, the City of Gainesville submitted comments on the draft feasibility study to the US EPA Region 4 Office; a copy of the submission is on file at GRU and the City Manager’s office. On November 23, 2009, representatives from the City of Gainesville and Alachua County Board of County Commissioners met with US EPA Regional 4 staff to discuss the City/County comments on the draft feasibility study. EPA acknowledged some of the concerns, and other issues were brought up for additional discussion. The final feasibility study would not be issued before the end of the calendar year 2009. A copy of the meeting summary is on file at GRU.

The City of Gainesville Mayor, Pegeen Hanrahan, was invited to the EPA Regional Headquarters to meet with EPA Interim Regional Administrator Stanley Meiburg and EPA staff in January, 2010 to discuss the City and County concerns and issues on Cabot/Koppers Superfund site. Monthly conference calls between staff from the City of Gainesville, Alachua County Board of County Commissioners, the Alachua County Health Department and consultants will continue with EPA into 2010.

Develop a coordinated response at the local level to address energy policy and climate change

During the first quarter of fiscal year 2010, GRU submitted the Need Determination application to the Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC) for the proposed biomass plant, responded to 74 interrogatories, and participated in two hearings before the FPSC. Also, GRU assisted American Renewables in preparing the biomass plant’s Site Certification Application that was filed with FDEP.

General Government was formally awarded funding for three Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant projects including: 1) completion of LED Traffic Signals, 2) an LED Street Light Demonstration Project in the downtown area, and 3) energy audits for City buildings. All projects were fully funded at the requested level. City staff worked with the Department of Energy on the official grant award and grant training. Equipment procurement and project bidding will occur for the LED related projects in the second quarter of fiscal year 2010.

The Traffic Management System (TMS) Phase I field hardware installation is 100% complete and 83% are online communicating with the Traffic Management Center (TMC). Phase II is 100% complete and 63% are online and communicating with the TMC. Phase III is 89% complete and 44% are online and communicating with the TMC. Phase IV is 77% complete and 5% are online and communicating with the TMC. Overall, 87% of the field hardware has been completed and 58% of the signals are online in the TMC. Additionally, work began in the first quarter on the Public Works Administration Building, which includes a permanent Traffic Management Center. The building is being designed and constructed maximizing “green” building concepts. The building will be energy efficient and minimize its carbon footprint.

Improve the energy efficiency of modest-income homes through weatherization

The first quarter of FY10 has been a very busy one for GRU and its energy efficiency programs which are geared to low income customers. The City of Gainesville was awarded over $1 million in ARRA Federal Stimulus dollars under the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) formula funds. Of this funding, $528,500 will be used in combination with the $342,000 already budgeted to provide energy efficiency upgrades to low income customers through GRU’s LEEP (Low Income Energy Efficiency Program). GRU will retrofit 276 homes with improvements such as added insulation, duct leak repair, HVAC equipment, and others. Since the beginning of the fiscal year, 14 homes have received retrofits.

Another project GRU has been very involved with is the Community Weatherization Coalition (CWC). Created two years ago, the CWC is a group of volunteers trained to conduct energy surveys on homes and install weatherization and efficiency measures. GRU provides training for the CWC’s volunteer energy surveyors, supplies weatherization materials, and $300 in grant funding for each home completed. Eight homes have been completed since the beginning of the new fiscal year.

Review the status of commercial recycling ordinances

The number of commercial recycling audits performed during the first quarter totaled 379, which is higher than average; but commercial recycling tonnages have fallen off sharply, presumably due to the lagging business economy. Commercial recycling totals for the first quarter fell to 904 tons, making it very unlikely that the 2010 target of 6,616 tons will be reached. Staff is investigating the possible causes for this decrease.
Partnerships

Champion effective and institutionalized relationships with other government entities and community partners

Formalize relationships with other community partners

Key Partnerships Opportunities for Transit
UF and RTS continued a strong collaborative effort providing park-n-ride services known as “Gator Aider” during football games. RTS negotiated a new transportation fee for FY11 that includes enhancements on two regular City Routes (Routes 1 and 8) and the creation of a new Route 38. Google Transit was also implemented, allowing transit customers to plan their trips via the World Wide Web. In addition, RTS met with UF staff, students and faculty to discuss sustainability issues and other transit improvements, including expanding the use of bio-diesel on all RTS routes. RTS and SFC continue to work together supporting Senate and House Bills (SB 0208 and HB 0255) that authorize Community Colleges to establish a transportation fee that would improve transit services to and from SFC.

Key Partnerships Opportunities for Sustainability
The Community Sustainability Forum has continued to grow. The third meeting of the group was held in November 2009 at GRU and focused on “Waste Realities and Options”. The fourth meeting was held on February 17, 2010 at the Chamber of Commerce.

Key Partnerships Opportunities for Hospitality Districts
The University Police Department (UPD) continued expanded services covering the College Park Business District across from the UF campus on Wednesday through Saturday nights. UPD also continued providing officers to support Party Patrol which provides dedicated officers to respond to complaints about noise in single-family neighborhoods. UF indicated its intent to continue providing these services beyond the original fall 2009 pilot period. It is the City’s hope that UPD services addressing off campus areas frequented by students will continue on a permanent basis.

Increase involvement of the City in improving the quality of City schools

The workshop held by the City Commission on October 29, 2009 regarding the City of St. Petersburg’s efforts to support local schools and student achievement was well attended and received by community partners. The Alachua County Public Schools Foundation also shared their local efforts at the workshop. There have been further discussions with the Foundation as to potential opportunities.

In 2010, efforts will focus on identifying the model and initiatives that should be pursued. Staff is hopeful that federal funding will be approved to support this initiative.