



DICK A. GRECO
MAYOR

August 12, 1999

Honorable Chairman and
Members of City Council

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased to present to you the Recommended Annual Budget for the City of Tampa for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 1999 and ending September 30, 2000.

The budget for FY2000 totals \$585 million and does not include an ad valorem property tax millage increase. The millage will remain at 6.539 mills. This is the eleventh year no adjustment has been made to the City's ad valorem tax rate. New development, increased assessments and a systematic review of property value rates and exemptions by the Property Appraiser, have allowed the City to yield additional property tax receipts without having to adjust the millage rate.

As you are aware, development of the budget is a major endeavor for the City each year. Input is received from City Council, various neighborhood and civic associations, City departments, other governments, outside agencies, and of course, our citizens.

A predominant trend in the budgets of the last several years has been the increasing emphasis on addressing not only new development and a need for additional facilities, but replacing or rehabilitating the large number of deteriorating City facilities and aging vehicles and equipment. For the Year 2000, that trend culminates in a budget that uses every available means to replace and upgrade City assets.

The majority of those efforts occur in the Capital Improvement Program with the use of bond funding. Although the \$585 million City budget represents a 14% overall increase over FY99, the Capital program portion is increasing by almost 60% to \$144 million. The remaining non-capital budget is increasing less than 4.5%. The Capital program increase is driven by a number of recent bond issues and a bond issue anticipated in early FY2000. User fees and utility taxes generally support these bonds. As we reviewed with you in July, per capita General Government debt service for Tampa remains one of the lowest in the State. Although Enterprise debt service continues to be funded by user fees, for the second consecutive year we are not recommending any change in the rates of the Water, Sanitary Sewer or Solid Waste departments.

Following are highlights of FY2000 programs which primarily replace or rehabilitate the City's buildings, infrastructure and equipment.

Bond projects programmed for FY2000 include:

- **Water Bonds:** At the Hillsborough River Water Treatment Plant construction will start this year to expand the plant capacity to 100 million gallons a day, up from the current capacity of 80 million gallons per day. This two-year project is expected to cost approximately \$45 million. Also this year, the \$8 million Aquifer Storage Recovery (ASR) project will begin. When completed ASR will store up to 1 billion gallons of water during the wet season to be used later in the year during the dry season. This will help to reduce our need to purchase more expensive water from other utilities.
- **Solid Waste Bonds:** In July, 1999 construction started on the 32-month McKay Bay Refuse-to-Energy Retrofit project. This \$88 million project is needed to meet recently adopted federal guidelines for cleaner air emissions. This bond issue also includes \$2 million for a new administration building for Solid Waste, replacing an old, inefficient facility.
- **Utility Tax Improvement Bonds:** These bonds have been issued over the last three years and are earmarked to help alleviate parking shortages in downtown, Ybor City and the South Howard Area. Funding is also provided to begin an intensive effort to improve our Parks and Recreation facilities. These bonds address 16 special program facilities, community centers, and athletic and aquatic facilities, with \$7 million of the total \$17.5 million planned for FY2000.
- **Local Option Gas Tax Bonds:** For FY2000, \$13.3 million is planned for transportation related projects including funding for the new electric streetcar, 40th Street Lane Widening, a new industrial yard and road improvements in New Tampa.

In addition to the above bond programs, other funds such as the Community Investment Tax, Federal Funds, recurring Utility Taxes and the Sale of City Property are being utilized for renovating or replacing aging City facilities. Recently we purchased, renovated and opened the new Police Headquarters downtown and constructed and opened two new police district offices. In FY2000, we intend to replace Fire Station #13 on Annie and 29th Street near Busch Gardens, replace Station #12 at MacDill and Hillsborough, construct a new Station #23 in Hunter's Green and construct a new Police and Fire Rescue Communications Center at 30th Street and Hanna.

Two additional, long awaited, major recreation facilities will be opened during FY2000, the Sulphur Springs Pool Complex and the Copeland Park Community Center and Gym. Also, during FY99 we acquired the 2.2 acre Fort Brooke Park site located along Garrison Channel. This acquisition was assisted by a matching grant of \$3 million from the Florida Communities Trust Preservation 2000 program. Funding for the development of this park is included in this budget.

This budget concludes some major systematic replacement and renewal programs, and begins several others:

- Most Year 2000 (Y2K) computer system improvements have already been completed and all will be completed prior to the end of the calendar year. Several non-Y2K projects are planned for FY2000 including an upgrade of the mainframe computer, connection of all fire stations to the City's mainframe/wide area networks (WANs), and the replacement of a large number of personal computers.
- In FY99 we began, and continue in FY2000, a City-wide vehicle replacement program for sedans and light trucks, to result in a fleet with no vehicles older than seven years. This effort along with a new policy standardizing vehicle specifications, will help control costs, reduce vehicle downtime, and improve service to our citizens. Previous years vehicle replacements in the Fire Rescue and Police departments have already shown positive results.
- During FY99, the City hired additional staff called the "Super Crew". These individuals are charged

with going from City facility to facility making improvements that exceed the limits of our regular maintenance staff duties. At present, the Super Crew's efforts are primarily addressing the needs in our recreation buildings and fire stations. For FY2000, staff and equipment have been added for replacement of City heating/air conditioning systems. We expect replacement and higher levels of maintenance will ensure the continued reliability of these systems.

- Recent renovation of the German American Club, Tampa Union Station, and the Free Library are examples of dual-purpose projects. In addition to relocating staff from inadequate and aging facilities to new or renovated facilities, the City restored these historically significant structures in various areas to help encourage other positive development.

As we developed the budget, the continuation of a high level of police and fire rescue service to our citizens was paramount. This budget completes the Police take-home vehicle program, continues the Fire Rescue vehicle replacement program and provides funds for improvements to both Police and Fire Rescue records, voice and data communication systems, as well as funds for staffing assistance in the dispatch centers. The Fire Rescue Department will also be deploying a twelfth rescue vehicle unit. The seven additional staff and equipment should reduce stress, more equitably distribute emergency services, and improve response times. In response to citizen requests for better traffic enforcement in our neighborhoods, the City will add a new traffic squad. These eleven officers, along with the continuation of the posting of 25 MPH speed limit traffic signs and other neighborhood traffic control improvements, will help address the citizen concerns in this area.

Staff is being added to various departments to accommodate the increased need for service connected with development, and the increased levels of capital construction. Although there is considerable development activity on the part of both the City and private developers, we remain financially conservative. We recognize that additional staff, improvements, and bond issues require prudent planning for the future. This budget includes those conservative measures, reserves and fund balances in order to prevent any negative impact arising from any adverse property tax rulings; the stabilization of property tax receipts; a reduction in grants or State pass-through funds; or a slowdown in development or the economy.

I am looking forward to working with each of you in the new millennium to pursue our common interests of providing the highest level of services to our citizens while keeping taxes and fees as low as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dick A. Greco". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dick A. Greco