

# Message from the Mayor

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Dear Citizens,

Progress. That's what our administration has been all about. For the past four years we have tackled tough problems, invested in all parts of Tampa and have watched our great city prosper. Each year we have devoted more of your tax money into those services you have asked for - public safety, street paving, parks and recreation, a cleaner city and flooding problems. Investing in the basics is important because a city with a strong foundation will have a strong future.



This year we were faced with a challenge. Mandated budget rollbacks and cuts from Tallahassee meant that we had to cut approximately \$20 million from our budget. Further, the new legislation restricts the growth of our future revenues. This year our millage rate dropped 10.5 percent. Hopefully, when you receive your tax bill this year, you will notice a decrease in what you pay to local governments.

With a decrease in property taxes of course comes a cut in the city budget. We have been careful in making the cuts, trying to affect the fewest number of city services. We eliminated 214 positions out of the general fund as well as part-time and seasonal positions. Those cuts came from all city departments and at all levels. We did not affect the service you will receive from police or fire. Your other basic services - water, wastewater and solid waste - are also not affected by the cuts.

The greatest impact has been to Parks and Recreation. It is one of our largest departments and offers a huge array of services throughout the city. We know these cuts do affect some people in this community and that we regret. But given the challenge before us to cut not only today's budget but to reduce the size of city government for the future, these cuts are necessary.

Yet even at a time when we face cutbacks we should never stop emphasizing the need for progress. With crime at the lowest rate since the 1970s, with residential

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construction booming in our downtown, and with previously blighted areas turning around, now more than ever we need to invest in our city and continue to make needed improvements.

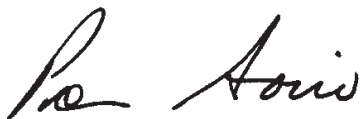
This year's budget theme, "Providing Quality Services," reflects our commitment to our residents. From our police and fire to the 165 parks throughout our neighborhoods, our city is all about quality. It's about building quality for the future - a new Tampa Museum of Art, a new Curtis Hixon Park, a new 40th Street, a new recreation center in New Tampa and new stormwater projects that will stop flooding in neighborhoods.

This year we are investing more dollars than ever before in our "Investing in Neighborhoods" program. More than \$6.4 million are going towards sidewalks, street resurfacing and maintenance, traffic calming devices, and street signs.

Tampa's progress will continue. We have made our city government smaller and we will continue to find ways to save money by doing business more efficiently. Your tax money will go to those basic services that you rely on and expect. The services you receive from the City of Tampa are quality services. We want Tampa to be one of the most livable cities in the country and so we will continue to invest revenues wisely in order to continue to move our city forward.

This budget for fiscal year 2008 reflects our continued commitment to the citizens of Tampa.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pam Iorio". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Pam" and last name "Iorio" clearly distinguishable.

Pam Iorio